

**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT OF  
COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES: A  
CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC SERVICE  
DELIVERY IN FORTH WARD, EDINBURGH**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY

2017

*Dedicated to God for continuously guiding me throughout my journey and showing me that for Him and with Him nothing is impossible in life.*

## **Abstract**

Performance measurement within public services is a key feature of the literature but at ward level it has been an under-studied concept. This thesis presents research within a ward with deprived and affluent areas, focusing on community education service provision and the part performance measurement plays in it.

The literature shows the importance of community education services in deprived areas to empower residents. They have the potential to impact positively on the lives of individuals and communities. Performance measurement is meant to ensure the delivery of value for money, quality services but it can instead be a barrier. In subjective areas like community education, measurement is difficult.

The primary research was conducted in a qualitative case study. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with ward stakeholders. The key findings identify constraints surrounding performance measurement in subjective services. While there was increased emphasis on measuring performance the value of such procedures was questioned. Performance measurement practices did not necessarily lead to improved service outcomes. The findings uncovered many specifics concerning both the process and the context. As community education was credited with reducing public service dependence by supporting self-reliance, dedication to such services was seen as necessary. Changes were needed, in performance measurement and more broadly, as there was a risk that the sector would not be able to operate soon. Despite the various representative bodies, effective local input, which was needed, had yet to be achieved.

The findings draw out real issues with potentially serious implications. They highlight how the public service provision might be improved at the most micro level of democracy, the ward, where citizens experience first-hand public services. The research could therefore be of value to policy-makers and those responsible for service provision.

**Keywords:** performance measurement, public services, community education, local government, ward, service managers

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart my whole family (my mother Rozsa, brother Attila, grandparents Rozsa and Ferenc, my other half Jaani, and father Douglas) who have persuaded, supported and motivated me throughout this research journey. Not least I need to thank you all for understanding and accepting my absence. Without your love I could have never done this. So this is a shared result for all of us!

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr David McGuire and Dr Ian Elliott who together with Dr Peter Falconer guided me and advised me through the process. Their contribution has been invaluable to this thesis.

My gratitude is also extended to Queen Margaret University for providing me the chance to undertake this research as a bursary student and also giving me the opportunity to tutor. I would like to thank the staff at QMU for being nice and encouraging especially Virag Hamori and Elaine Crichton. I need to thank my fellow Ph.D. colleagues for their friendship and support throughout these past years, particularly Grace, Nesrin, Nicole, Fatima, Daria, Cecilia and Christine. My good friends Laura, Franziska and Michaela also need to be thanked for supporting and encouraging me over the years.

A great deal of gratitude also extends to the stakeholders of the ward who provided me with interviews. Without sharing their time and experiences with me my thesis could not have been written.

Last but not least I would like to express my gratitude to King's Church and especially to Vivien McVie for providing the proofreading service for international students. Your time and support is greatly appreciated.

I wholeheartedly thank Mrs Ann Nelson for supporting, guiding and motivating me when I did not see the wood for the trees. God bless you for that! Moreover thanks to everyone at the Sycamore Tree Café and Davidson's Mains Parish Church for praying and encouraging me at the latter stages of this whole experience.

## Abbreviations

BV	Best Value
CC(s)	Community Council(s)
CEC	The City of Edinburgh Council
CLDMS	Community Learning & Development Managers Scotland
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CPP(s)	Community Planning Partnership(s)
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LGA	Local Government Association
MP	Member of Parliament (Westminster)
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament (Holyrood)
NESHG	North Edinburgh Social History Group
NPF	National Performance Framework
NPG	New Public Governance
NPM	New Public Management
NP(s)	Neighbourhood Partnership(s)
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSA(s)	Public Service Agreement(s)
SfC	Services for Communities
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

SNP	Scottish National Party
SOA(s)	Single Outcome Agreement(s)
TPA	Traditional Public Administration

## Definition of key concepts

**Best Value:** A component of government policy for Scottish local government for which a statutory framework was introduced in 2003. Its aim is continuous improvement, ensuring quality and value for money public services (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; McConnell 2004; Mackie 2013; Audit Scotland 2013b).

**Community Planning Partnership:** A Community Planning Partnership is the name given to all those services that come together to take part in community planning (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003).

**Key Performance Indicators:** Measures that an organisation chooses to indicate whether the important working processes are on course to achieve the goals of the organisation (Boyle 2000; Dicker 2010; Zakaria *et al.* 2011).

**National Performance Framework:** The government's vision for a successful country. This provides the focus and direction that the government and public services aim to achieve with wide-ranging measures of national wellbeing (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013). It was introduced in 2007 by the Scottish Government in consultation with local authorities and others.

**Neighbourhood Partnership:** The joint work amongst the council, local people, community groups, councillors, police and local businesses to improve the life and public services of local residents (Forth NP 2011, 2015). The Neighbourhood Partnership helps to identify the priorities for the area by local consultations and works towards achieving those points identified in the local community plan.

**New Public Governance:** A concept of public administration that focuses on inter-organisational relationships, networks among the public sector and the private and voluntary sectors. Public services are delivered by multiple actors to achieve the best outcomes, and they also are involved in policy-making (Osborne 2010, 2013).

**New Public Management:** A concept that emphasises the adoption of private sector models in the management of public services. The emphasis is on putting service users at the heart of services. Managers are given flexibility to achieve goals but are accountable for results (Hood 1991; Mackie 2013).

**Single Outcome Agreements:** Single Outcome Agreements are established between the Scottish government and local authorities. SOAs reflect the NPF outcomes hence the central government's goals are translated to the local level to benefit local service users (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Mackie 2013).

**Traditional Public Administration:** The concept refers to the type of public administration in which government performed without citizen involvement using a hierarchical format with complex administrative procedures (Hood 1991; Rhodes 1997; Miller and McTavish 2012).

**Wicked Problems:** Problems that are difficult to solve because of their complexity. Solving one aspect of a wicked problem may lead to or create other problems (Horton and Farnham 2002; Ferlie *et al.* 2011).



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## **Chapter One - Introduction**

# Chapter One – Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Improving public services has been on the agenda of local and central governments for many decades (Modernising Government 1999; Newman 2005; Christie 2011; Miller and McTavish 2014). Over time user expectations and service reliance have increased yet funding for public services has decreased (Simmons *et al.* 2009; Mackie 2013; Burton 2013). Public service delivery has been engaging with local communities to build closer relationships with citizens in order to meet their needs. The current decentralisation aims to empower local people to determine what their community delivers and what needs are to be met (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010; Christie 2011; CEC 2011d; Scottish Government 2014b).

While performance of public services has always been a concern (Bouckaert 1993; Put and Bouckaert 2013) in the current environment of financial constraints and high demand and expectations, performance has come to the forefront to ensure good quality services that are efficient, effective and economic (Magd and Currie 2003; Fryer *et al.* 2009; McAdam *et al.* 2011; Flynn 2012). The growing influence of New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG) has intensified the public service concern with organisational performance. Today's public services are not businesses but their operations are business-like (see, for example Magd and Curry 2003; Massey and Pyper 2005; Flynn 2007; Eliassen and Sitter 2008).

This thesis focuses on performance measurement in the field of community education services within Forth Ward in Edinburgh. Having looked at a range of public services, community education was selected due to its premise of transforming lives by educating and supporting people to deal with their problems (Edwards *et al.* 1993; Simmons *et al.* 2009). It can lead to self-reliance, empowerment and positive changes that can benefit not only the individual but also the community (Ledwith 2011; Scottish Government 2012b; CLDMS 2016). The

significance of Forth Ward is that it is one of the most deprived areas of Edinburgh despite having a wealthy part within the ward that is amongst the most affluent areas of the city (Community Planning 2006; SIMD 2009, 2012; Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics 2014). This study notes the significance of “understanding the specific, the local, the particular” (Schwandt 1997, p.58). The research topic represents an opportunity to explore experiences in greater depth to improve existing knowledge on the subject. For that reason qualitative, face to face, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 61 stakeholders of Forth Ward: local residents, local public service managers, activists, community councillors, local councillors and members of parliament both Holyrood and Westminster.

## **1.2 Research aim**

The research aim is to investigate performance measurement of community education services at Scottish local government level, within the context of Forth Ward, Edinburgh.

## **1.3 Objectives**

The following objectives underpin the research aim:

1. To understand the relevant political and governmental environment within which Forth Ward exists.
2. To develop a comprehensive literature review of performance measurement and its application and importance within public services.
3. To identify the key stakeholders within Forth Ward and discover their perceptions so as to have a comprehensive view of the ward and its service provision. The key stakeholders include local public service users, residents, activists, public service managers, local councillors and policymakers.

4. To discover the nature and extent of the influence which performance measurement has at ward level, especially within community education services.

#### **1.4 Overarching research questions**

- What is the relationship between the local authority and the ward?
- What is the opinion of local people on the availability and delivery of services?
- In what way does performance measurement operate in Forth Ward?
- In what way and by whom are performance targets established?
- How are the processes of performance measurement undertaken in local services?
- What are the attitudes of service managers?
- What evidence is there that the local people benefit from the performance culture?

#### **1.5 Rationale**

Building knowledge is fundamental for social change and community development. Community-based research is required especially in fields of wellbeing and social concerns, in order to intervene, make changes and establish better outcomes for the future (Minkler and Wallerstein 2008). The subject of ward level public service performance has received very little attention from academics therefore there is a need for further studies in the field. Bevir and Rhodes (2001), McConnell (2004), Danson (2005), Keating (2005), and Miller and McTavish (2012) call for further research into both Scottish public policy and local government. Likewise very little is known about the field-based nature of local government and the views of managers, service-users, and public sector stakeholders at a time when the public service sector is facing many challenges (Diamond and Liddle 2013; Miller and McTavish 2012,

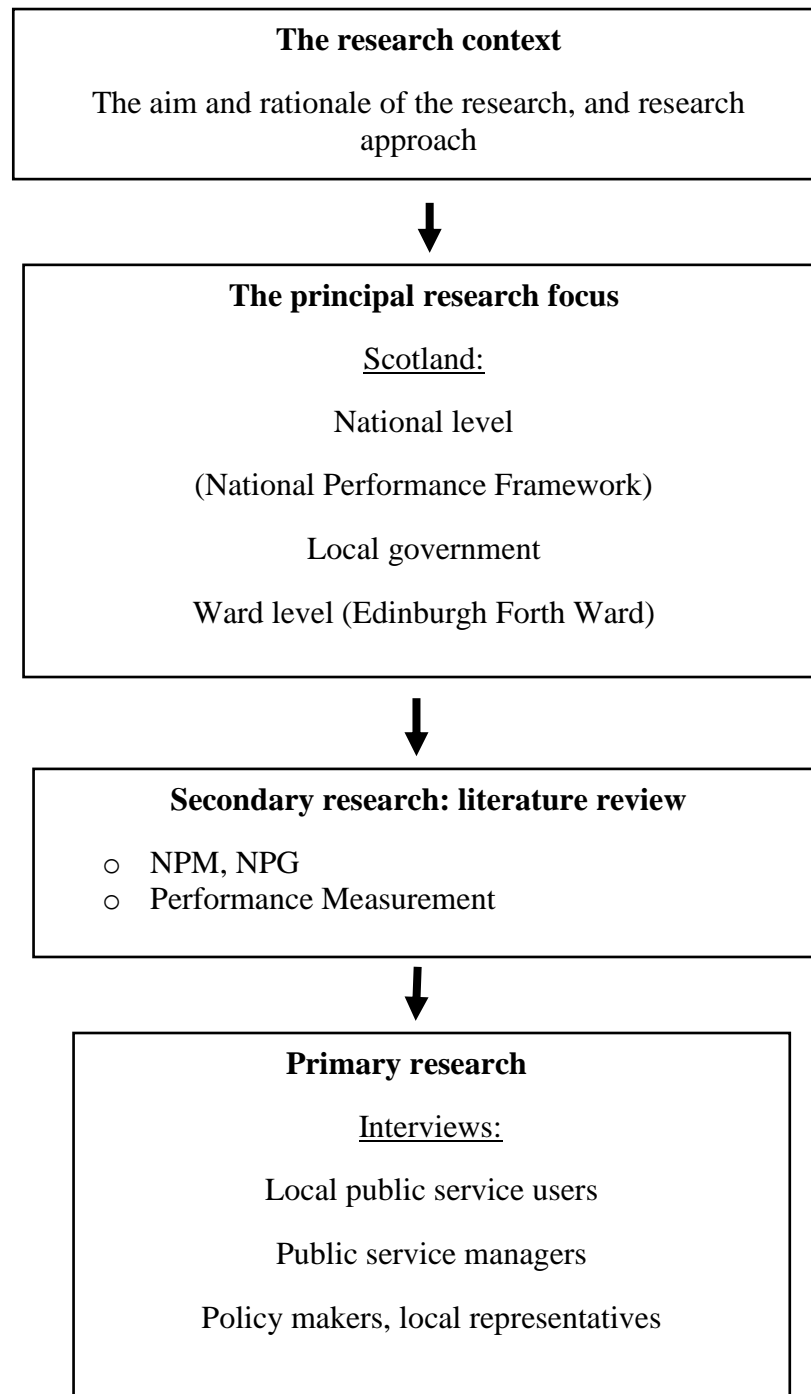
2014). With regard to the specific issue of performance measurement Boyne *et al.* (2006), Talbot (2007) and Sanger (2008) call for greater academic attention.

In light of the above, the purpose of this research is to investigate performance measurement in ward level public service delivery. Therefore the study compares the literature with the reality of service delivery while discovering the views of local service users. This study aims to advance both the academic and practical understanding of public service provision especially community education and its performance measurement within Edinburgh's Forth Ward. As a result the thesis will generate an original data-set.

## **1.6 Research process and forward plan**

In Figure 1.1, the proposed path for the study is provided.

**Figure 1.1: The research journey**





## **1.7 Thesis structure**

Chapters Two to Four cover the secondary research, Chapters Five and Six the research approach and Chapters Seven to Nine the primary research and conclusions. Chapter Two introduces Forth Ward, outlines how representation and partnership arrangements operate at local level and gives an introduction to the provision of community education services. Chapter Three studies the influences that New Public Management and New Public Governance concepts have had in public service delivery. These involve the application of private methods to the public domain and the emphasis on performance measurement. Public finance and the current funding cuts within the public service environment in Scotland are considered. The literature review continues in Chapter Four with an examination of performance measurement. It explores the promises of performance measurement within the public domain. Elements of the process (e.g. targets, indicators, measures) and influences on the process (e.g. measuring hard-to-measure services, funding cuts, bureaucracy) are also addressed.

Chapter Five sets out the philosophy of the research methodology and its suitability. It addresses the possible methodological approaches before explaining that a qualitative method is most fitting for this particular research. Chapter Six reveals how the fieldwork was planned and carried out. It outlines the selected sampling design for participation, the interviews that were conducted and how the collected data was examined.

Chapter Seven presents the findings of the semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders. Chapter Eight discusses the findings and relates them to the secondary research, the literature review. Chapter Nine ends the thesis with conclusions from the main findings, comments on their significance and suggestions for further research areas.

## **Chapter Two – Context**

## **Chapter Two – Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In order to appreciate performance measurement at ward level, this secondary research chapter, in accordance with objective one, introduces the locality and sets it in its governmental and political context. It begins with an overview of Forth Ward including the statistical data that highlights the dissimilar nature of the areas within the ward. The chapter moves on to explore the means for community representation and partnership work locally, before considering the provision of community education services.

### **2.2 Forth Ward**

#### **2.2.1 The physical locality**

Forth Ward is situated on the northern coastal periphery of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital. It is situated about two miles away from the city centre (Dean and Hastings 2000; Community Planning 2006; EdiGroup 2016) and it consists of the areas of Muirhouse, Pilton, Granton, Wardie, Trinity and Newhaven (Community Planning 2006). These areas can be categorised into three distinct localities with dissimilar pasts. On the west, Muirhouse and Pilton were purpose built in the 1930s to provide council housing to relieve the high demand in the Leith area (Dean and Hastings 2000; NESHG 2011; Edinburgh Past and Present 2013). There was at the heart of this area a large engineering works until 2000, a site which is now housing (Edinburgh Past and Present 2013).

In the centre, the area of Granton and Wardie had the first car making factory in the UK (Granton History 2010; EdiGroup 2016). Little industry remains, and there are a number of derelict sites (EdiGroup 2016; CEC 2016c). This area is close to the coast and has for some years been scheduled for redevelopment to create 550 homes as well as retail and leisure facilities thus ultimately local jobs (CEC 2016c; EdiGroup 2016). The old Telford College, now the Granton Campus of Edinburgh College (Edinburgh College 2016), is in the area and to the south, at the edge of the ward, there is a large engineering works (Leonardo 2016).

To the east of the ward, Newhaven was a lively fishing community in the past (Newhaven-on-Forth 2016). It now features some upmarket apartments on the shore but little by way of commerce and industry (Newhaven-on-Forth 2016). Trinity was and is a leafy suburb, built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a mansion house district (Edinburgh Guide 2014). It is one of the most sought after neighbourhoods in Edinburgh (Edinburgh Guide 2014).

The ward has various community outlets providing classes for, and opportunities for engagement within, the community (CEC 2016a). In Muirhouse and Pilton are the Muirhouse Millenium Centre, North Edinburgh Arts Centre, West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre, and Prentice Centre. In Granton there is the Royston Wardieburn Community Centre. In Wardie there is a Wardie Residents Club and Community Centre. There is one library in Pilton and one in Granton while the Trinity area has a mobile library (CEC 2016b).

For simplicity the thesis will generally refer to Muirhouse and Pilton as ‘Pilton’, Granton and Wardie as ‘Granton’, and Trinity and Newhaven as ‘Trinity’ – Pilton, Granton, and Trinity. Forth Ward will generally be referred to as ‘the ward’.

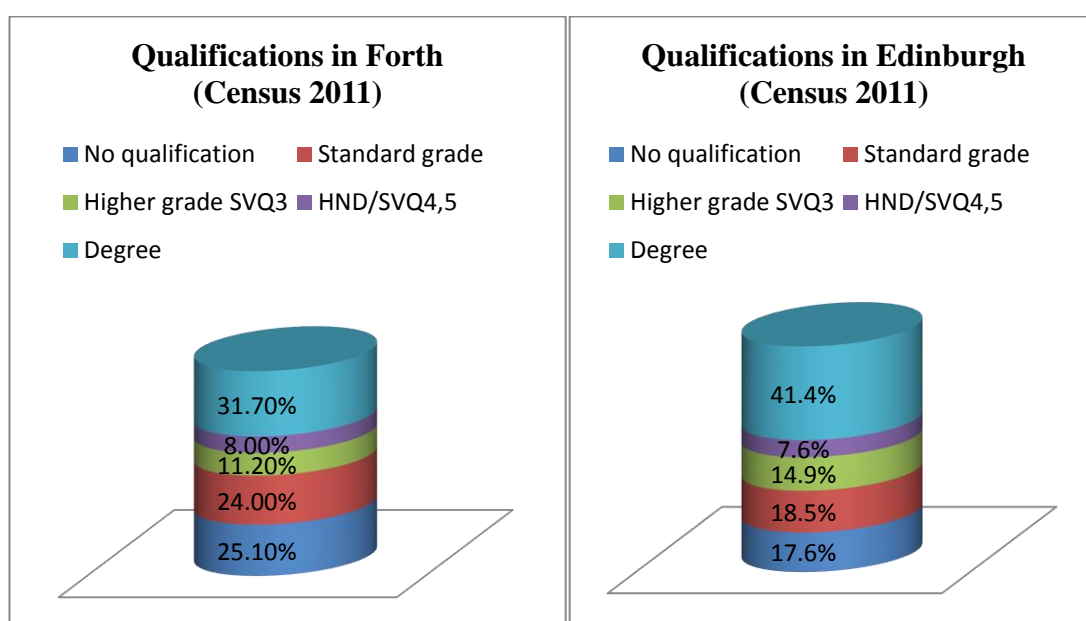
### **2.2.2 Ward statistics**

Wards are areas created for local government electoral purposes. Residents elect councillors to represent them on the local authority (The Local Governance

(Scotland) Act 2004; ONS 2014). Since 2007, Scotland has multi-member wards (Baston 2008; Mackie 2013; ONS 2014) with Forth Ward having four City of Edinburgh councillors (Forth NP 2015). Before this, for decades a single councillor represented a smaller area (ONS 2014). Of the 353 electoral wards created in 2007 in Scotland (Local Government Boundary Commission 2012; Miller and McTavish 2012; Mackie 2013), 17 are in Edinburgh (Census 2011). All Scottish wards have nearly the same number of electors (Local Government Boundary Commission 2012). Accordingly, Forth Ward has over 33,000 residents (Community Planning 2006). With the creation of multi-member wards, areas that have dissimilar backgrounds are more likely to be grouped together (Baston 2008; ONS 2014). In the example of Forth Ward, areas like Pilton and Granton are grouped together with more affluent areas like Trinity. Pilton is one of the most deprived areas of Edinburgh (Dean and Hastings 2000; Community Renewal 2016).

In many aspects the ward, as a whole, is ranked below most of the other wards in Edinburgh (Forth NP 2011; Edinburgh People's Survey 2013; Community Renewal 2016). For instance, education is highlighted in the Census (2011) data showing that there are more people in the ward who have no qualifications compared to Edinburgh as a whole, and fewer people with degrees. See Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Qualifications (over 16s) in Forth Ward and Edinburgh**



Revealingly, the most educationally deprived datazone in Edinburgh is in Muirhouse (which is grouped with Pilton in this research). It is among the 5 per cent most deprived and most education deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD 2012; Community Renewal 2016). Accordingly, the Census (2011) data displays a lower level of educational, skills and training achievement in the ward compared to the rest of Scotland (SIMD 2009).

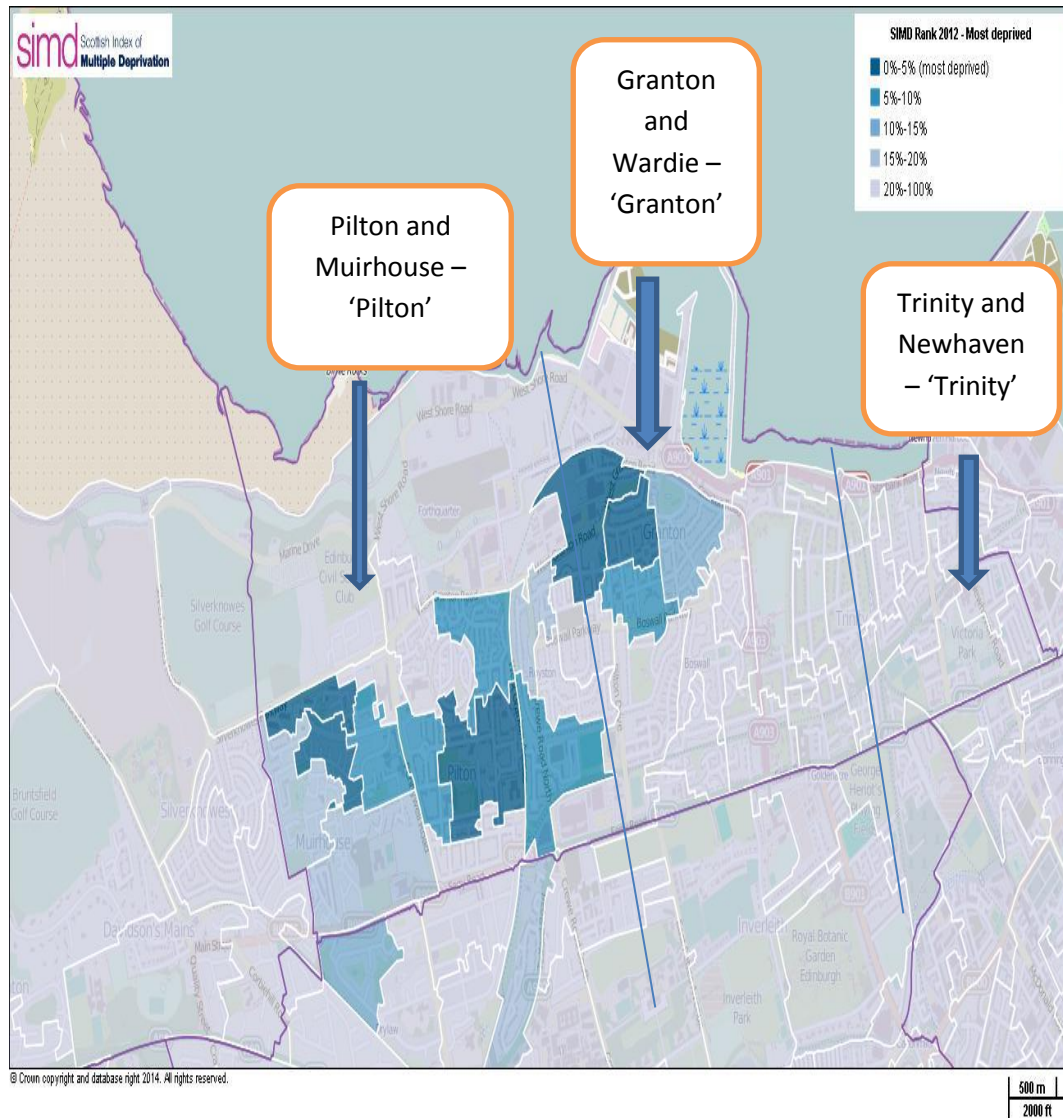
While some of the educational achievements are not particularly area bound, the higher qualifications are more prominent within Trinity and lower attainment is more visible within Pilton and somewhat in Granton (Census 2011). The concentration of these variances in educational attainment seems to reflect the differing characteristics of the areas in the ward. There are other contributing factors too but lower attainment is considered to be an outcome as well as a cause of poverty and deprivation especially in Pilton and Granton (Community Planning 2006; Pirrie and Hockings 2012).

Figures in Appendix Two (p.290) reveal more general statistical information about the ward. Appendix Two for instance shows that the ward has higher unemployment than Edinburgh as a whole though it is slightly lower than Scotland as a whole (Census 2011). Despite this, Forth Ward's economically inactive figure is somewhat lower than both Edinburgh and Scottish figures.

SIMD, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, is a key tool for identifying the ongoing problems of an area of deprivation in Scotland. The statistical evidence (in Appendix Two) seems to highlight that Forth is below the Edinburgh and also Scottish average. In parts of the ward all of the indexes that the SIMD (2009) measures are below the Scottish average with the most disadvantaged areas being Pilton and Granton (Community Planning 2006). Employment and health in the ward are both slightly below average, housing is below average and the crime rate is significantly higher than average (Dean and Hastings 2000; Community Planning 2006; Census 2011). Some areas of the ward have been found to have one of the lowest levels of life expectancy in the city (male 72.5, female 78) (CEC 2011c; King 2012). This is three years below the Edinburgh average, and almost five years below that of the city centre.

A detailed map (see Figure 2.2) by SIMD (2012) locates deprivation within the ward.

**Figure 2.2: Forth Ward's SIMD map**



**Source: adapted from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (2012)**

In the SIMD (2012) map the darker the blue the more deprived the locality. Deprived areas are in the west and central parts of Forth, in Pilton and Granton. There are none in the east of the ward, in Trinity. See Appendix One (p.288) for additional Forth Ward maps.

For illustration purposes, based on the SIMD (2012) map, one datazone was randomly selected from each of the three distinctive areas of the ward; Pilton,

Granton, and Trinity. Their individual characteristics, revealed by seven main matrixes based on SIMD (2012) statistics, are as follows:

**Table 2.1: Typical Forth areas**

Area's rank* for being the <i>most deprived area in Scotland</i> (out of the 6505 data zones)	PILTON (West Pilton; Ferry Road Drive area)	GRANTON (Royston; West Granton Road area)	TRINITY (Trinity; Trinity Grove area)
Income:	278 <sup>th</sup>	152 <sup>nd</sup>	6101 <sup>st</sup>
Employment:	507 <sup>th</sup>	290 <sup>th</sup>	6311 <sup>th</sup>
Health:	297 <sup>th</sup>	369 <sup>th</sup>	6213 <sup>th</sup>
Education:	369 <sup>th</sup>	220 <sup>th</sup>	6359 <sup>th</sup>
Geographic access to services:	5447 <sup>th</sup>	4602 <sup>nd</sup>	5221 <sup>st</sup>
Crime:	299 <sup>th</sup>	273 <sup>rd</sup>	6076 <sup>th</sup>
Housing:	1034 <sup>th</sup>	1220 <sup>th</sup>	5583 <sup>rd</sup>

\**the larger the number the less* deprived the area is. The most deprived 10 per cent rank between 1 and 651.

**Source: SIMD (2012)**

A ward with differing socio-economic characteristics within it leads to contrasting areas (affluent and less affluent) such as Trinity and Pilton. These could indicate dissimilar needs and expectations (Duffy 2000; Hastings *et al.* 2012; Matthews and Besemer 2014).



### 2.2.3 Understanding and addressing deprivation

It is argued that where people live will affect their life chances (Hastings *et al.* 2005, 2012; ONS 2012). Manifold problems in this ward have been well documented. In the deprived parts of the ward there are inequality issues coupled with low aspirations and health and housing problems that the SIMD frequently reports on along with other publications (e.g. Community Planning 2006; SIMD 2009, 2012; NESHG 2011; Census 2011). The nature of these ward issues is not new, as the above publications show these seemingly have been prevalent over a long period of time. This indicates that the root problems have not been successfully tackled which leads to an unnecessary ‘failure demand’ on services that could have been prevented with earlier intervention (Christie 2011; Mackie 2013). For example, between SIMD 2006 (Community Planning 2006) and SIMD 2012 most of the relevant parts of Forth Ward have stayed in the 15 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland (Community Renewal 2016). It is the endemic deprivation of Pilton and Granton that is featured in the novel and film *Trainspotting*. They drew attention to the issues of deprivation particularly addiction (drugs), health (AIDS) and poverty (Dean and Hastings 2000). Since then funds have been injected into these areas, though some are still not desired as places to live in (Dean and Hastings 2000; Sunday Herald 2003). Local people outline the ways deprivation has been persistent in the less affluent parts of the ward when calling for changes (NESHG 2011, p.43):

Sadly, many of the issues faced by the area’s early residents – poor housing conditions, unemployment, poverty, ill health and discrimination continue to blight the lives of a significant number of people in North Edinburgh. ...real change can only be achieved through a commitment by Government to tackle the root causes of these issues and not just the symptoms. In the meantime, the struggle for social justice continues.

The continuing nature of deprivation is reflected for instance in examples of generations of unemployed families in the ward (Community Renewal 2016). Thus breaking this chain and so tackling long-term deprivation is one of the priorities for the area to prosper (NESHG 2011; Pickering 2012). The Cabinet Office (2005, p.6)

states that “poor public services and an ineffective system for delivering support to deprived areas” is one of the main reasons that keep deprivations unending. In Scotland one of the objectives in the government’s National Performance Framework (NPF) (in Appendix Three) is reducing inequalities in Scottish society. The question emerges how inequality can be reduced by the available public services in the ward and whether services can deliver a change, or in other words have an impact on those who use them and the area as a whole. Therefore the subject of service performance becomes important, to understand what is happening in delivering and receiving the public service.

Despite the fact that local government provides everyday services to the nation, McConnell (2004), Goddard (2004), Danson (2005), and Miller and McTavish (2012) note a shortage of studies on the subject of Scottish local government. It is at ward level that a deeper understanding of communities and the micro management of their local services can be further understood (NP 2014; Community Councils 2015). Lately, more attention is being paid to some service areas of local government, though ward level case studies are still relatively uncommon. Therefore this research aims to make a contribution to the understanding of ward level service delivery.

### **2.3 Representation at ward level**

The significance of local government has been well documented (Boyle 2000; Hughes 2003; McConnell 2004). It is argued that local government is the level on which citizens are most likely to experience firsthand the work of the elected government (Smart 1997; Boyle 2000; Clarke 2002; Lipsky 2010; Moran 2011). Local authorities provide a wide range of services in relation to “protection, welfare and convenience” (Magd and Curry 2003, p.263) that impact on the everyday lives of citizens. The varied nature of local authorities’ services aims to deliver the nation’s needs for everyday life, and the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) is the local authority that oversees the needs of Edinburgh’s almost half million inhabitants (Audit Scotland 2013b).

Public service delivery especially at the most local, ward, level requires the understanding of what residents hold dear and value in order for the local authority and its service managers to be able to incorporate those values into, and to plan, services accordingly (Moore 1995; Nabatchi 2010). There are numerous ways to achieve this. A primary way, it might be thought, is through the individuals that people in the ward elect to the local council. Local government represents community self-governance (Gramberg and Teicher 2000). That said, there is a debate on how local local government is when 32 councils look after the 5 million plus population of Scotland. Many see the local authority areas as too large (McConnell 2004; McHugh 2006; Atkinson *et al.* 2010; Christie 2011). The degree to which in the case of the ward, four councillors can represent an area with 33,000 inhabitants could be open for debate.

A local councillor's job is said to be to represent people, scrutinise local public services, work with other sector partners and communicate back to locals (COSLA 2011). In the policy-making process, the councillors not only represent their ward but shape citywide policy implementation by their collective decision-making and scrutinising power (LGA 2011). Though the number of councillors has increased with multi-member wards, their ability to represent all areas within a larger ward, as well as having fellow councillors with the same responsibility for area representation, might perhaps complicate their jobs (Clark and Bennie 2008; Miller and McTavish 2012). There will be an opportunity to test this in the primary research when collecting data from both local councillors and local people.

Despite representation through local councillors, some studies suggest that at local level instead of those with the greatest needs, wealthier areas benefit from public services the most (Duffy 2000; Seddon 2008; Hastings and Matthews 2011). People in wealthier areas tend to be more vocal and engaged (Duffy 2000; Roe 2012). For example, it has been found that they have longer appointments with the service provider and more accessibility to services (Hastings and Matthews 2011). In deprived areas services are found to be falling short on delivering quality to local residents (Duffy 2000; Hastings *et al.* 2005; Hastings and Matthews 2011). People in less affluent areas are found to be less satisfied with their local services and thus

government (M2 Presswire 2005; Hastings *et al.* 2005, 2012; Matthews 2012). Locals' opinions on their services will be one of the research questions along with local managers' opinions in relation to measuring service performance to understand ward level service delivery and receipt of it.

At a national level policy-making is the responsibility of the Scottish and UK governments and parliaments. Many of the matters that Scottish local authorities deal with are devolved to the Scottish Government and Parliament, including for example education, health, housing, environment, social services and economic development (McConnell 2004; Scottish Parliament 2011; Scottish Parliament 2012; Scottish Parliament 2013). The benefits and social security system is reserved to the UK Government and Parliament (Scottish Parliament 2014).

Ward boundaries are unrelated to the boundaries for Member of Parliament (MP) and Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) elections. While most of the ward is within the UK parliamentary constituency of Edinburgh North and Leith (and the similar, but not identical, Scottish Parliamentary constituency of Edinburgh Northern and Leith), Muirhouse is within Edinburgh West (Edinburgh Western for Scottish Parliament) (Parliament 2015). This means that Forth Ward is not represented as a single ward by a single MP and MSP respectively but by two MPs and MSPs who each also represent another neighbouring area. In addition the 7 Lothian Regional MSPs also cover Edinburgh (Parliament 2015). The representation of the ward by multiple parliamentarians could possibly lead to complications for the ward's identity, and real problems could be divided and masked by adjoining areas (Miller and McTavish 2012). Moreover, it could be difficult for local people to know who their parliamentarians are. Issues might not be dealt with as easily as if the area was represented as a whole ward by one MP and MSP respectively rather than two. There could be an opportunity to test this too in the primary research when collecting data from both local parliamentarians and local people. The dynamics among parliamentarians, communities (those living and working) in the ward, and the local authority (councilors and staff) will be a central element for this research in order to understand the case of the particular ward.

Every ward has several community councils (CC) (Community Councils 2013; 2015). In Forth Ward there are four: Muirhouse Salvesen; West Pilton/West Granton; Trinity; and Granton and District (Forth NP Community Councils, no date). A community council aims to make the locality a better place to live in by representing its people and linking the community with the local council and other public bodies. Community councils are the most local tier of elected representation (Scottish Government 2012a; Community Councils 2015). However there is a degree of uncertainty as to the influence of community councils. Whilst the Scottish Government (2012b) put the emphasis on the concept that in local decision-making CCs' views get heard, McConnell (2004) considers that their value is limited because of the lack of legal rights that community councils have. The most power that CCs seem to have is in the planning system as the local authority needs to consult them to understand the locals' view prior to approving future developments (McConnell 2004; McGarvey and Cairney 2008).

## **2.4 Partnership work**

Over the years there has been a realisation that decision making for localities should be less centralised and more open to users, locals (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Mackie 2013). Ideas of governance (which will be discussed in Chapter Three) have highlighted this. New Public Management (NPM) concepts emphasised among other aspects the importance of a service being user (citizen)-centred. Working closely, as New Public Governance (NPG) ideas advocate, with communities and public service providers in structures such as partnership has come to the fore. These are intended to join up public service providers, deliver better quality services that meet and better respond to local needs and be more economic by providing best value. Accordingly, The Local Government in Scotland Act (2003) gives the local authority the responsibility for community planning (McConnell 2004). Councils have a Community Planning duty to work together with local institutions on the advancement of the area (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Mackie 2013). The local

authority provides many services in a locality that residents use. Through their provision the authority has a deeper knowledge on the area. This knowledge helps with the authority's community planning role to join up with other service providers from other sectors that have an interest in the locality and its future.

A trend towards partnership working has been considered by some as affording a better chance to deal with local issues and thus to improve the life of the area (Department for Social Development 2003; McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Forth NP 2011, 2012, 2015; Mackie 2013; Accounts Commission 2012; Edinburgh NP 2016). A third of the geographic area of the capital is among the wealthiest in Scotland while at the same time over 10 per cent of SIMD (2012) zones in Edinburgh rank as among the most deprived areas of Scotland (Audit Scotland 2013b). As indicated earlier this includes parts of Forth Ward. Narrowing the inequality gap has received the attention of both local and central government for years (McConnell 2004; Keating 2005; McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Christie 2011; Hassan and Ilett 2013). For instance the Christie (2011) Commission, tasked by the Scottish Government to look at the future of public services (see Chapter Three), argued for more funds to be allocated to crucial services that deal with the severities of deprived areas in order to better the prospects for sustainable changes.

The benefits of having empowered communities are outlined by many. Ledwith (2011) and Neil (2011) talk about the need for sustainable resource allocation in order to empower deprived communities. The allocation to such an area needs to be for a long period of time with clear vision as to the aims to be achieved. That is what Weiss (1995) and Simmons *et al.* (2009) found as so often being absent. Gradually, pursuing a clear vision and having long-term resource allocation lead to self-reliance and thus stability by transferring knowledge to citizens (Edwards *et al.* 1993; Simmons *et al.* 2009). Closing the gap between wealthy and poorer areas is reflected in approaches such as the Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs), set out between the central government and each local authority in Scotland. Their aim is to align the outcomes for a local authority area with the Scottish Government's countrywide vision through following the National Performance Framework (NPF) (see Appendix Three) (Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013). The strategic priorities of the city's

Community Planning Partnership (CPP) based on the Edinburgh SOA are to improve the capital by working together with all of the CPP's partners towards the outcomes set out in the SOA. The SOA translates the NPF vision to the city and is carried through to the ward level by the Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) community plans (Edinburgh Partnership 2013; Forth NP 2015).

Edinburgh has 12 Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs). These are intended to work to improve specific local areas (Edinburgh NP 2016). As part of the community planning framework, NPs advise the council and involve local people's views on local services (Edinburgh NP 2016). Forth Neighbourhood Partnership is one of the 12 NPs (Forth NP 2012; Edinburgh NP 2016). The members of Forth NP are local CEC councillors and representatives of CCs, and the various local service providers (inclusive of health, police, fire, and the voluntary sector). NPs work by networks amongst the different sectors (Osborne 2010).

An open channel of communication and involvement between all the parties, such as residents and service management, is fundamental for partnership working to achieve what is wanted of it. It is suggested that the knowledge that each NP member has of delivering day to day services for the area is one of the key forces behind successful governance (Forth NP 2012; Edinburgh NP 2016). However there are doubts whether CPPs and NPs are influential enough to make long lasting changes (Matthews 2012; Scottish Government 2012b; Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014; CEC 2015a). Matthews' (2012) study did not find them effective or to contribute to lasting outcomes. The Scottish Government along with COSLA reviewed community planning in 2012. Their findings were similar to Matthews (2012). Further evidence suggests that strong partnerships amongst members and community engagement have not necessarily happened as a result of NPs (CEC 2015a). In order to make community planning, its partnerships (CPP) and at more local level the NPs, work for the people and the areas they represent, a change that allows for more attention on those local people could be seen as necessary. For this the Scottish Government ought to provide resources and support via policies that encourage leadership, hence granting more freedom for local self-governance (Mackie 2013).

As well as partnership work, a preventative approach developed together with the community is suggested to be the solution to local problems (Forth NP 2011, 2015; Cairney and St Denny 2015). Accordingly, the NP sets out a three yearly community plan on which to focus. This plan is intended to reflect the local needs through a local survey (Audit Scotland 2013b; Forth NP 2015). The 2014-2017 Forth Ward Community Plan (in Figure 2.3) reiterates the concerns of the previous community plan with an emphasis on young people, and community engagement and support (Forth NP 2011, 2015). This suggests that over time the general local concerns remain the same. Given that parts of Forth have deep-seated, long-standing difficulties that have proved challenging to resolve, this seems to indicate the sustainable nature of the plan. The plan (Forth NP 2015) seeks to tackle such “wicked problems” over a longer period of time (Horton 2006 and Farnham 2002; Ferlie *et al.* 2011). The recognition of the need to improve community inclusion, something that community education facilitates, is also an element of the community plan.

**Figure 2.3: Forth Ward local community plan 2014-17 (Forth NP 2015)**





## **2.5 The City of Edinburgh Council and community education**

In relation to community education the following NPF strategic objectives are applicable: “improved life chances for people of all ages, including young people in particular, through learning, personal development and active citizenship” as well as “stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities” (Scottish Government 2016, see Appendix Three, p.296). In order to address such objectives within Edinburgh the remit of community inclusion and learning comes under the CEC’s department of Services for Communities (SfC) (CEC 2015a). These services are delivered in neighbourhoods and, as just mentioned, the intention is that service providers work closely with community representatives in the forms of community councils and Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) (CEC 2012a, 2012b). The provision of local community education services such as libraries, community engagement, and support and advice services comes under the ‘well engaged and well informed’ remit of the SfC department, as does community planning and Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) support (CEC 2015a).

Programmes related to community education are based on theories of what those residents could achieve if they buy into participating (Brickmayer and Weiss 2000). This could be being able to cook healthier, more nutritious food for themselves and their families (via cooking classes), becoming more active and thus healthier (via fitness classes), learning to read, computing (adult education classes), being able to bake bread (community education classes), becoming empowered parents (parenting classes), having a responsible yet enjoyable early adulthood (youth centres), using the libraries and community centres thus engaging their children in using these facilities which contributes to their social and educational development, etc. All education-related programmes involving the community aim to change residents’ attitudes in the direction of better self-fulfilment and self-actualisation (Edwards *et al.* 1993; Ledwith 2011). There are many outlets delivering community education

services within the ward which include third sector provision in association with CEC or even without council funding.

The wide range of issues that community education and engagement are involved with are represented by the specialised outlets dotted about in the ward. There are various training and community education programmes and initiatives located in some of the centres mentioned at the start of the chapter. The libraries also host different workshops and engagement for adults and children (CEC 2016b). As well as local authority services, there are organisations that focus on parenting advice and classes (e.g. North Edinburgh Childcare (2016) in Pilton, and Stepping Stones (2016) in Granton). There are initiatives to train/retrain people for employment (e.g. Muirhouse Community Renewal (Community Renewal 2016)). There are youth centres in Pilton and Granton. The Pilton Community Health Project centre in Granton focuses on wellbeing, health and nutritional education for adults (PCHP 2016). Providing advice to citizens is also facilitated by impartial outlets in Pilton (Citizens Advice Bureau 2016) and in Granton (Granton Information Centre (GIC 2016)). In the Pilton area there is the council office (North Neighbourhood Office) serving residents of North Edinburgh.

There are specific council pledges that relate to the SfC provision of well engaged and well informed: Pledge 33 and Pledge 35. Within these the council aims to strengthen the relationship with locals in order to work together and make decisions about council resource allocation (CEC 2015b). Libraries especially are also set to become even more involved in providing a wider range of services in relation to community education. The objectives of these pledges are summarised in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Well engaged and well informed, SfC objectives**

<b>Objectives:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop integrated services as one stop neighbourhood places for engagement, employability, leisure and learning.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library Service that is high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs and aspirations.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Become a leading advice service working with partners in Edinburgh delivering a holistic response to welfare rights and debt issues.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to develop the Neighbourhood Partnership approach to improve local services, performance and outcomes.</li></ul>

**Source: Adapted from CEC (2015a)**

These objectives could be considered challenging to deliver. While there are a multitude of issues that local authorities face (such as increasing demand and improving performance) the one that affects all of these is the reducing funds available for the public sector (Scottish Government 2010; Accounts Commission 2012; Sergeant 2012; Mackie 2013; Judge 2013; Audit Scotland 2013a, 2016). Controlling expenses has been one of the most challenging contemporary tasks of governments while improving their services as demands for public services grow while budgets decrease (Ruzita *et al.* 2012; Matthews 2013; Malone 2015). Consequently this will have implications on community education services. (This will be further discussed in Chapter Four.) The ongoing cuts to public sector services result in an increase in top-down policy implementation (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Christie 2011). The funding of adult community education has been described as short-termist and its policy-making as ad hoc which go against achieving long-term, sustainable changes (Edwards *et al.* 1993). CEC sees the key in prevention. It expects to achieve long-term changes by responding to the needs of citizens and equipping young people with advice, support and overall the right skills for the future (CEC 2012c). For this, libraries and other public service providers need to make the best use of resources which raises the subject of their performance.

As a sound performance measurement system is concerned with providing best service to local residents (see Chapter Four) (Poister 2003; Sanger 2008; Fryer *et al.* 2009; Talbot 2010), it is essential to investigate just how effective, efficient, economic and equal the Scottish public service delivery is at the micro-level, at the ward. This is perhaps even more important in the case of a divided ward which has people with multiple deprivations in some of its areas and wealthier people in others (NESHG 2011; SIMD 2012; Pickering 2012). Community education by nature provides subjective services, i.e. ones that are intangible and dependent on the individual recipient. They are thus not easy to measure which can cause difficulty in quantifying their achievement (Weiss 1995; Simmons *et al.* 2009).

Moreover the demands of seeking to implement the objectives in Table 2.2 could lead to additional stress amongst the workforce especially at a time when public service staff morale has been reported to be low (Horton 2006; CEC 2010a). Atkinson *et al.* (2010) have already noted that senior managers are under huge pressures to lead organisations forward in the current challenging times.

Whatever the challenges they face, community education services contribute to people's quality of life, both mentally and physically through providing community places for information, learning and support, such as libraries, advice services, community centres and similar outlets. By transferring knowledge and providing support, citizens can deal with their problems, thus reducing stress and encouraging security and empowerment (Edwards *et al.* 1993; Simmons *et al.* 2009). This feeds into the government's vision of supporting people in order for them to make positive changes not only in their lives but in their communities (Scottish Government 2012b; CLDMS 2016). Aims to empower people to take charge of their own lives and their communities recognise that service outcomes often are seen over time and not necessarily at the point of the service being delivered (Edwards *et al.* 1993; Ledwith 2011). The government thus envisages the need for citizens to be open for empowerment, participation, inclusion, self-determination and partnership (Scottish Government 2012b). Whether in a divided ward people feel supported to fulfill, and whether community education service providers are able to back, such roles of citizens as the government advocates will form part of the primary research.

## 2.6 Conclusion

Chapter Two has introduced the ward selected for the research. Forth Ward has a mixture of wealthy and deprived parts. Deprivation, with its implications, has been present in some parts for a long time (Dean and Hastings 2000; Community Planning 2006; SIMD 2009; NESHG 2011; SIMD 2012). The importance of local government as provider of essential everyday services to communities, as well as of governance and representation, has been well documented (McConnell 2004; Simmons *et al.* 2009; CEC 2011a). In deprived areas community education is considered to be significant in order to attempt to address the complexities that often are present as a result of deprivation (Scottish Government 2012b; CLDMS 2016).

The many forms of area representation within the ward (i.e. CCs, local councillors, MPs and MSPs) and the arrangements for partnership working such as the NP have also been introduced and debated. The local plan for the ward has been outlined, and how the council takes forward the relevant aspects of the NPF through its community education services. Some of the challenges that community education services face have been indicated. Funding issues make long-term planning difficult (Edwards *et al.* 1993). Since these services need time to assist with achieving sustainable change a short-term outlook could be damaging (Ledwith 2011; Neil 2011). Community education services are subjective. This means they are not easily measureable which could be a problem when measuring performance (Weiss 1995). Pressures on staff could also be an issue (Horton 2006; CEC 2010a; Atkinson *et al.* 2010). These various aspects will be explored in the later chapters.

The next chapter considers the policy environment within which public services occur, looking at New Public Management and New Public Governance.

## **Chapter Three – New Public Management and New Public Governance**

## **Chapter Three – New Public Management and New Public Governance**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter Two mentioned some of the latest local concepts of community planning, partnership work and community representation. This chapter explains the background to these. It considers how public services and their delivery have been influenced over time. It shows how the emphasis came to be on public services that are responsive to users' needs, and offer quality and best value. It explains how performance measurement became important in the name of improving quality, and economic, efficient, and effective service provision.

### **3.2 Management of the public sector: TPA and the shift to NPM**

Over the last decades there has been a move to reform the public domain and locate its decision making process closer to the people affected (McConnell 2004). The traditional form of public administration, what came to be called Traditional Public Administration (TPA), was performed by government without citizen involvement using a hierarchical format with complex administrative procedures (bureaucracy). It was about serving the social and economic needs of the nation by equality in conduct with citizens (Osborne 2010; Miller and McTavish 2014). In other words, the state governed the public via an authoritative public management style (Rhodes 1997).

This form of public management focused on inputs to services (e.g. money, resources) rather than the results achieved (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; McKevitt and Lawton 1994; Mwita 2000; Hartley *et al.* 2008; Ellison *et al.* 2012). Therefore administrators were perceived not to be efficiency and effectiveness conscious. This

perception was partly because of the structural monopoly, the lack of indicators concerning organisational performance and the large size of organisations masking inefficiencies (Rauskala 2003). Processes were deemed inefficient and lacking clear accountability leading to waste of resources (Rauskala 2003). Since organisations were slow to react and make changes, their provided service quality and performance suffered (Mwita 2000; Ellison *et al.* 2012). Public services generally were regarded as a non-industrial sector which merely used up the funds of the state economy (Ranson and Stewart 1994; Mwita 2000; Hughes 2003; Massey and Pyper 2005; Simmons *et al.* 2009). Over time the concept of TPA came under extreme scrutiny from academics and politicians alike (Hood 1991).

Several features are associated with the emergence of the reforms to improve the public sector. The influence of globalisation, rising expectations, technological change and international competitiveness have characterised the last 40 years (Hughes 2003; Pollitt 2003; McLaughlin *et al.* 2006; Lynn 2006; Kapucu 2006, 2009; Katsamunskas 2012). Moreover the election of the centre-right, the economic problems from the 1970s, coupled with the administrative difficulties within the public sector all contributed to the belief that changes were necessary to tackle ongoing problems (Ferlie *et al.* 1996; Lane 2000; Gruening 2001; Osborne 2010; Christensen and Lægreid 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014).

What became known as New Public Management (NPM) has its roots in public-choice theory and managerialism (Gruening 2001). It is a collective name for different trends (Adcroft and Willis 2005). In contrast to TPA, in NPM the non-political elements of bureaucracy (purchaser, provider and controller of a service) were kept distinct from the political element of bureaucracy (policy-makers, high ranking civil servants), on the basis that the former could be operated on private sector lines (Ferlie *et al.* 1996; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). NPM is conceptualised as a set of policies and actions designed to alter organisational structures and lead to a more efficient and effective public service (Kapucu 2006). Katsamunskas (2012) and Mackie (2013) assert that the relationship between government and society was transformed. Falconer (2014) sets out the difference between TPA and NPM. See Table 3.1.



**Table 3.1: The fundamental ideology behind TPA and NPM**

<b>Manifestation of Reform</b>	<b>Ideological Basis</b>
Traditional Public Administration	The belief that public services should be provided publicly; based upon traditional administrative approaches.
New Public Management	A belief in the primacy of the private sector; the view that improvements in the performance of the public sector require a stronger engagement with management and a reliance on the disciplines and values of business and private sector styles of management.

**Source: Falconer (2014)**

### **3.3. New Public Management**

Since the 1980s, there have been influences to reorganise the public sector, modernise government and take inspiration from private sector management techniques (e.g. introducing competition) (Newman 2005; Jong 2009; Peters 2011). These initiatives trusted that the way forward for enhanced and economic public services was through decentralisation, providing more powers at local level with a key element being customer orientation. Hood (1991) called this NPM, a new approach as compared to the well-known and well-used practices as to how to govern the state (Lane 2000; Osborne 2006, 2010). See Table 3.2 for the seven doctrines of NPM identified by Hood (1991).

**Table 3.2: Seven doctrines of NPM**

<b>Doctrine</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Justification</b>
1. Hands-on professional management of public organisations	Visible managers at the top of the organisation, free to manage by use of discretionary power	Accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility, not diffusion of power.
2. Explicit standards and measures of performance.	Goals and targets defined and measurable as indicators of success.	Accountability means clearly stated aims; efficiency requires a 'hard look' at objectives.
3. Greater emphasis on output controls.	Resource allocation and rewards are linked to performance.	Need to stress results rather than procedures.
4. Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector.	Disaggregate public sector into units of activity, organised by products, with devolved budgets. Units dealing at arm's length with each other.	Make units manageable; split purchasing and provision, use contracts or franchises inside as well as outside the public sector.
5. Shift to greater competition in the public sector.	Move to term contracts and public tendering procedures; introduction of market disciplines.	Rivalry via competition as the key to lower costs and better standards.
6. Stress on private-sector styles of management practice.	Move away from traditional public service ethic to more flexible pay, hiring, rules, etc.	Need to apply 'proven' private sector management tools in the public sector.
7. Stress on greater discipline and economy in public sector resource use.	Cutting direct costs.	Need to check resource demands of the public sector, and do more with less.

**Source: Hood (1991)**

What particularly distinguished this approach was the private sector influence on management within public services. Introducing private methods is assumed to support the public sector by making it more business-like (Hood 1991; Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Walsh 1995; Rose and Lawton 1999; Gramberg and Teicher 2000; Magd

and Curry 2003; Jong 2009; Kapucu 2009; Ellison *et al.* 2012; Christensen and Laegreid 2013; Mackie 2013; Falconer 2014; Miller and McTavish 2014). Hence “administrative reform” was accompanied by “business type managerialism” (Adcroft and Willis 2005).

Also, in the private sector, markets were considered to provide better resource allocation, effectiveness and efficiency. In a market economy, supply meets demand and customers have generally more choices (Rose and Lawton 1999; Johnson and Scholes 2001; Gianakis 2002; Flynn 2007; Eliassen and Sitter 2008; Davis 2011). Within the public sector, internal competition was created in order to introduce a marketplace and to shrink the state (Kerley 1994; Lane 2000; Magd and Curry 2003; Hughes 2003; Mackie 2005, 2013).

The ideas of NPM emphasise the importance of the three Es: efficiency, effectiveness, economy (value for money) (Pollitt 1990; 2003). With money being less readily available than previously, one of the main principles of NPM is the focus on cost reduction while improving quality (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Lane 2000; Gruening 2001; Tully 2014; Miller and McTavish 2014; Falconer 2014).

Managers are perceived to be pivotal for improved services due to their ability and knowledge so as to maximise quality and value (Pollitt 1990, 2003). While parliament sets the goals and funds services, management of public services is the responsibility of service providers (Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). The idea was to move away from a bureaucratic approach and allow managers freedom to manage in return for accountability to the public through politicians. There appeared to be a shift from political to managerial accountability (Ferlie *et al.* 1996; Stewart 1996; Rauskala 2003; Mackie 2005; Eliassen and Sitter 2008; Ellison *et al.* 2012). As Hood noted (Table 3.2) accountability means clearly stated aims, and the targets and performance measures applied lent themselves to easier performance monitoring for quality (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Fryer *et al.* 2009; Falconer and Mackie 2011).

The UK Government’s White Paper Modern Public Services (Modernising Government 1999) introduced Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for more visible accountability of public services. Each department had to explain their aims,

objectives and the progress they planned to make (Eden and Hyndman 1999; Bruijn 2002; Gay 2005). This new performance policy set out targets for public bodies. While perhaps a radical measure, the rationale for targets lay at the heart of ensuring clarity. Although such transparency would have been formulated better with a reduction in the number of targets, nonetheless the focus was on continuously improving public services and their outputs (Newman 2005).

PSAs covered a three year period. Service Delivery Agreements supported PSAs by providing lower level targets for detailed delivery planning (Eden and Hyndman 1999). Talbot (2010, p.11) sums up the PSA as “a quasi-contract between HM Treasury and the spending Ministry, linking resources to reform and delivery”. The three year timeframe of the spending review was intended to encourage planning ahead and to provide stability in delivering services. During this time action plans also supported the Best Value concept of continuous improvement (Flynn 2012).

### **3.3.1 Local government and NPM**

While the nineteenth century saw the flourishing of local government, in the second half of the twentieth its importance declined (Moran 2011). A lesser level of independence, functions, stability and money allocated to local government all contributed. In the 1970s local government was considered as inefficient and reorganised into bigger units to create economies of scale (Flynn 2007). Financially it became dependent on central government which resulted in it losing a large part of its freedom. Since the central government scrutinises local government it is involved more as the predominant provider of funds (Talbot 2010; Moran 2011).

When UK Prime Minister Tony Blair of New Labour came to power in 1997, the party followed what the previous Conservative Party started: to reorganise public services and local government (Newman 2005; Flynn 2012). Otherwise known as the modernisation of government, it has, at its heart, the NPM principles. The changes involved the application of a mixed economy namely the involvement of private

sector providers in public service delivery, as well as more accountability and power for local government (Rauskala 2003; Osborne 2006; Mackie 2013).

Some like Wilks-Heeg (2011) argue that from the period of Conservative Party government (1979-1997) onwards UK politics had become more centralised. However the Labour Party government (1997-2010) in 1999 devolved powers to Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (Newman 2005; Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013). In Scotland devolution reinforced the relationship between central and local government. Scottish local government has received more devolved powers and autonomy (McConnell 2004; McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). There has been less emphasis on top-down regulations with increased autonomy to respond to local priorities and therefore greater accountability for councils and service managers (Cairney 2011).

The PSAs mentioned in section 3.3 can be regarded as the roots of the current Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and Community Planning in Scotland. SOAs are between the Scottish government and local authorities. The central government's goals are translated to the local level and, as mentioned in section 2.4, councils also have a Community Planning duty to work together with local institutions on the advancement of the area (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Mackie 2013).

### **3.3.2 Citizens and NPM**

Over time there was an emerging prominence of social inclusion (or community inclusion as it is often referred to within this thesis) and democratic rights (Newman 2005; Elliott *et al.* 2010; Valkama *et al.* 2010; Miller and McTavish 2014). This in a way would manifest itself in drawing citizens' attention to what was being delivered to them and citizens expecting more from their services (Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011). The Citizen's Charter (launched originally in 1991 under Conservative Prime Minister John Major) was renamed Service First in 1998 under New Labour (Cabinet Office 1998). The essence of the charter remained the same, focusing on customer

satisfaction, quality, effectiveness and responsiveness (Bruijn 2002). It promoted performance indicators and targets within public services to ensure quality, choice and standardisation of services (Rauskala 2003; Katsamunskaja 2012). The initiative set out the importance of service users, citizens and their right to good service any time they needed it (Cabinet Office 1998; Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011). Showcasing the NPM principles, the charter signified a direct relationship between public service providers and users (Rauskala 2003). It implied that in addition to accountability to the public through politicians, there was managerial accountability from the provider to the service user.

### **3.3.3 NPM in practice**

The subjective nature of many public services challenges measurement. Having so many different values and stakeholders makes accountability and defining good performance, quality and effectiveness difficult (MacMahon 2005; Flynn 2007; Ferlie *et al.* 2007; Eliassen and Sitter 2008; Hartley *et al.* 2008; Fryer *et al.* 2009; Christensen and Laegreid 2011). Demonstrating that targets have been met has always proved difficult because of the complexity of the sector with social, market, and political aspects (Ranson and Stewart 1994; Horton and Farnham 2002; Adcroft and Willis 2005). Also, the attempts to fulfil the requirements of performance are often in contrast with the core of performance. This is because measuring performance is primarily a reaction to a requirement rather than an aspiration to achieve more (Seddon 2008).

The degree of freedom for managers to manage has also received criticism from some who see it as inadequate (Jong 2009; Christie 2011; Burton 2013). Complexities are claimed to appear in the form of strains within the roles of the workforce and management of public services (Horton 2006; Stern 2007). Regardless of their talents the attention to performance has seemingly shrunk the scope of their roles (Gruening 2001; Horton 2006; Jong 2009). Management tasks that progressively involve justifications are claimed to increase documentation, with

form-filling negatively impacting on staff's main task of serving users (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Chaharbaghi 2007; Jong 2009; Lipsky 2010). Others also find evidence of management role fragmentations and a negative influence of the NPM concepts in the way professionals approach management, colleagues and the public (Jansson and Parding 2011; Ellison *et al.* 2012).

More broadly, many like Denhardt and Denhardt (2007, p.3) assert that "[g]overnment shouldn't be run like a business; it should be run like a democracy". Using private sector practices in the public sector is viewed as lessening the value of public management (Gianakis 2002; Dent *et al.* 2004; Osborne 2010). Many like Rauskala (2003), Jong (2009), Mackie (2013), Miller and McTavish (2014), Cairney and St Denny (2015) argue that competition within the public domain is problematic as monopoly often still exists within some public service organisations. Some of the main unintended consequences are set out by Jong (2009) in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: The unintended consequences of NPM**

<b>Consequence:</b>	<b>Explanation:</b>	<b>Implication:</b>
Less political control, mistrust	With decentralisation the government shifts a lot of the responsibility onto the service organisation(s). While this frees the organisation(s) up in many ways it also creates more ambiguity and pressure amongst as well as within organisations.	Creates tension between politicians and service providers. Since the focus for services is to perform as well as possible in order not to get blamed, often organisations do not share and cooperate with others as well as they could.

Expansion of single-purpose organisations	With the drive for clarity as to what an organization is for separate organisations are created to oversee separate matters within the public domain.	This results in having far too many public service bodies, which leads to complications and confusion even amongst public service providers.
Fragmentation of roles  Creates role uncertainty	Job fragmentation can lead to uncertainty amongst employees not knowing who exactly is responsible for a certain aspect of a role.	Roles can overlap with other employees, creating duplication and different delivery standards and vagueness according to staff's personal standards.
Too little independence for managers	Managers have been given managerial powers to help them be more in charge of their service provision, based on private sector principles.	Despite the given powers there are many aspects that managers cannot control yet for which they can be blamed by users and by central departments, e.g. demand for the service and the complications that causes (e.g. waiting times), budgeting.

**Source: Adapted from Jong (2009)**

Many commentators allege that on the whole the Citizen's Charter, contrary to its aim, did not result in granting or transferring enough powers and real choice to service users (Rauskala 2003; Newman 2005; McConnell 2004; Mackie 2013; Burton 2013). If dissatisfied, they did not have the power of voice to influence change or the option of exit. Some still consider that service users do not seem to be presented with choices of alternative service provision thus markets for users are regarded as non-existent within public services (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011; Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). Many like



Hunt (in Rauskala 2003) go further by claiming that the Citizen's Charter only had a marginal influence on the rights of citizens. Despite its pledge on citizen's rights and so to modernise social democracy, one of the biggest flaws of the charter was that it did not allow citizens to be an active part of policy-making, to be shapers of their services. Therefore their roles remained passive (Newman 2005).

### **3.4. New Public Governance**

Interdependent networks have been an inclusive way of sharing responsibilities, without appointing any one organisation or provider above another (Fenwick *et al.* 2012; Ellison *et al.* 2012; Osborne 2013). While one of the features of TPA was central government control through hierarchical organisations, the NPM approach involved alternatives in the form of markets (Collier 2008). One of the underlying forces behind the alteration in the traditional hierarchical systems has been globalisation (Osborne 2010; Miller and McTavish 2014). Globalisation connects the world on a level never experienced before, yet the importance of localities has also been recognised. Because of the complexity of modern societal problems, multidisciplinary efforts are needed to attempt to tackle them (Diamond and Liddle 2013). In order to meet the needs of society organisations can benefit more from working together.

It came to be thought that success in lessening these “wicked problems” depends on a broader focus on the many disciplines involved in public services as opposed to single-mindedly emphasising management (Miller 2012). Attention turned towards the third sector with the expectation that it could offer solutions to some of the ills of public services (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Moran 2011; Miller 2012; Mackie 2013). Increasing collaboration between the public and voluntary sectors has resulted.

The literature, similarly to Miller and McTavish (2014), conceptualises the changes of recent decades in policy process and service delivery, collectively calling it New

Public Governance (NPG). The two frameworks, TPA and NPM, are combined with networks among the sectors, and a control system to deal with both the users and the providers of the public sector (Rhodes 1997). The role of networks is recognised to be just as vital in the process of governance for achieving better results as the focus on outputs, efficiency and effectiveness (Klijn 2008).

As the presence of both the private and voluntary sectors has increased within public service delivery, this has blurred the boundaries of the sectors. Government has been perceived further removed from delivering services and has become focused on policy-making (Bevir and Rhodes 2001; Osborne 2006; Denhardt and Denhardt 2007; Collier 2008). Much of the governance literature refers to this argument: that with a shrinking state not only government but other actors too have become involved in policy (Newman 2005; Osborne 2010; Moran 2011; Mackie 2013; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). Fenwick *et al.* (2012) explain that the state is not a sovereign authority, rather it is just one player in a pluralist system.

The key ideas of NPG aim to put control and coordination back into government. The emphasis is on outcomes and reaching out to society and private actors to understand these and help with policy-making and its implementation, thus ultimately addressing the fragmentation of NPM concepts (Eliassen and Sitter 2008; Skelcher 2008; Jong 2009; Christensen and Laegreid 2011). Therefore the key ideas include participation, shared powers and shared decision-making. These do not replace administrative (TPA) and managerial (NPM) concepts, but those concepts have had further complexity added to them (Osborne 2013). Social sciences also take central stage beside economic factors in state governance (Christensen and Laegreid 2011).

What ultimately differentiates this model from others of an administrative and managerial nature is the influential nature of stakeholders on policy-making (Bovaird and Löffler 2003; Skelcher 2008). While TPA was perceived to be about direct state involvement, under an NPM approach reliance was put on legal regulations, contracts and incentives, the challenge with NPG is whether government is able to carry out policies and govern by soft, indirect policy instruments (Eliassen and Sitter 2008). Whereas the concepts of NPM focused on the measurement of output and

results within an intra-organisational context, the key NPG ideas emphasise inter-organisational relationships: how organisations interact in order to achieve greater goals (Bovaird and Löffler 2003; Osborne 2006; Klijn 2012). Stoker (in Eliassen and Sitter 2008) concludes the six main characteristics of NPG principles in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4: The six characteristics of NPG**

<b>Characteristics:</b>	<b>Meaning:</b>
1. Demolishes the barriers of the private, voluntary and public sectors	<p>Contracting out opened up the relationship with all three sectors.</p> <p>Public Private Partnerships (PPP) became very popular. PPPs were beneficial to the state by shifting risks to a private organisation yet the public sector could learn from private sector practices.</p> <p>The disadvantages are high costs over a longer period. Even with the shifting of operational risks to the private organisation, the public sector still carries financial risks. While in the short-term PPPs bring benefits, longer term benefits and costs are more challenging.</p>
2. Involves more policy instrument than legislation	<p>Governing through different bodies, agencies. Aims to change behaviours by information campaigns. Believes that governing is to achieve goals and that this can be done not just through formal powers.</p> <p>Governance promotes partnership, communication, government spending in all three sectors to work together and thus provide services to the public.</p> <p>Monitoring that best practice is done and spread to improve performance.</p>
3. Involves many levels of government	<p>Governance involves cooperation between and coordination of many levels of government. The state in the UK is thus decentralised.</p>

4. Joined up government	<p>Coordination across government departments. During NPM the main aim was to improve efficiency by reorganising government bodies and also isolate the purchasing, provision and control of public services. This cooperation amongst the many involved and differently operating bodies has increased with the themes of NPG. The term 'holistic government' is used across all Europe to increase cooperation at every level, nationally and internationally. The political roles of the ministers and leaders are strengthened by central coordination.</p> <p>Governance is decentralised and less contact from the hierarchical authority is felt but the need for government, central control and coordination is still more vital than what it was considered in the models of TPA and NPM.</p>
5. Governance relies both on autonomous networks and hierarchical organisations	<p>Shift from hierarchical authority towards negotiations (based on power). Agencies delivering services to the public are negotiating and cooperating with not just the central government but also with other networks horizontally. In the principles associated with NPM the relationships were formed by clear contracts and goals as the norms. In the NPG model the actors have their powers due to their expertise and skills and participation within their network. Relationships formed between government and non-government actors by negotiation and bargaining thus replace the previous command, top-down systems as it was considered within the framework of TPA.</p>
6. Flexible regulatory system	<p>The emphasis is on flexibility and innovation.</p> <p>Best practice is spread by sharing successes with others.</p> <p>In the NPM model, inspections increased. With the NPG ideas the aim is argued to be to process a lighter, flexible regulatory system that still gives accountability and is clear.</p>

**Source: Stoker (in Eliassen and Sitter 2008)**

### **3.4.1 NPM and NPG ideas in practice: Scottish public sector finances**

Given the economic context, government since the 1970s had to manage with less available funds (Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013). As discussed earlier, such resource reduction played a key role in the emergence of the NPM model advocating the 'doing more with less' principle (Miller and McTavish 2014). The years following

Scottish devolution in 1999, however, saw high public spending UK-wide (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011). Scotland's funding from Westminster increased by an average of over five per cent a year in the first ten years of devolution, from £19.1 billion in 2000/01 to £29.7 billion in 2009/10 (Audit Scotland 2011a). This prosperity came to an end with the credit crunch from 2007 onward.

In 2010, the UK government outlined spending reductions in almost every area of the public sector over the next four years (Audit Scotland 2011a; Christie 2011; Wilks-Heeg 2011; Wakefield and Lodge 2012). Since Scotland receives most of its funding from the UK government, the reductions had a significant impact on the amount of money available to the public sector in Scotland (Mackie 2013). The Scottish Government estimated that its budget for day- to-day spending and running costs would fall by £3.3 billion in real terms (11 per cent) from £29.2 billion in 2010/11 to £25.9 billion in 2014/15 (Audit Scotland 2011a). Audit Scotland (2011a, 2011b) commented that very few Scottish public sector workers had experienced similar levels of budget reductions before. The Scottish Government estimated that it might take until 2024/25 before spending levels returned to 2010/11 levels (Christie 2011; Audit Scotland 2011a, 2011b; Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). The financial crisis in a way helped to reveal the imperfection of public service provision (Christie 2011; LGA 2012). It also provides a chance for correction in order to reshape and reform the sector for sustainability. Whereas previously council ineffectiveness (e.g. doubling some services, and low accountability) could be masked, since budgets are tighter, resources are not widely available. Accordingly, there is an even greater concentration on measureable results (Flynn 2007).

In order to sustain the quality of services, change and improvement is needed (Scottish Government 2011a). The Scottish Government appointed Christie (2011) to deliver a thorough report in order to assist the government to look at the future of Scotland's public services. Christie's (2011) commission urged Scottish public service reform in order to tackle the current challenges and difficulties. Demand is increasing for public services firstly with an ageing population and secondly with the economic pressures impacting on the lives of citizens as well as on services (CEC 2010a; Scott 2010; Scottish Government 2010; Christie 2011; CEC 2012a;

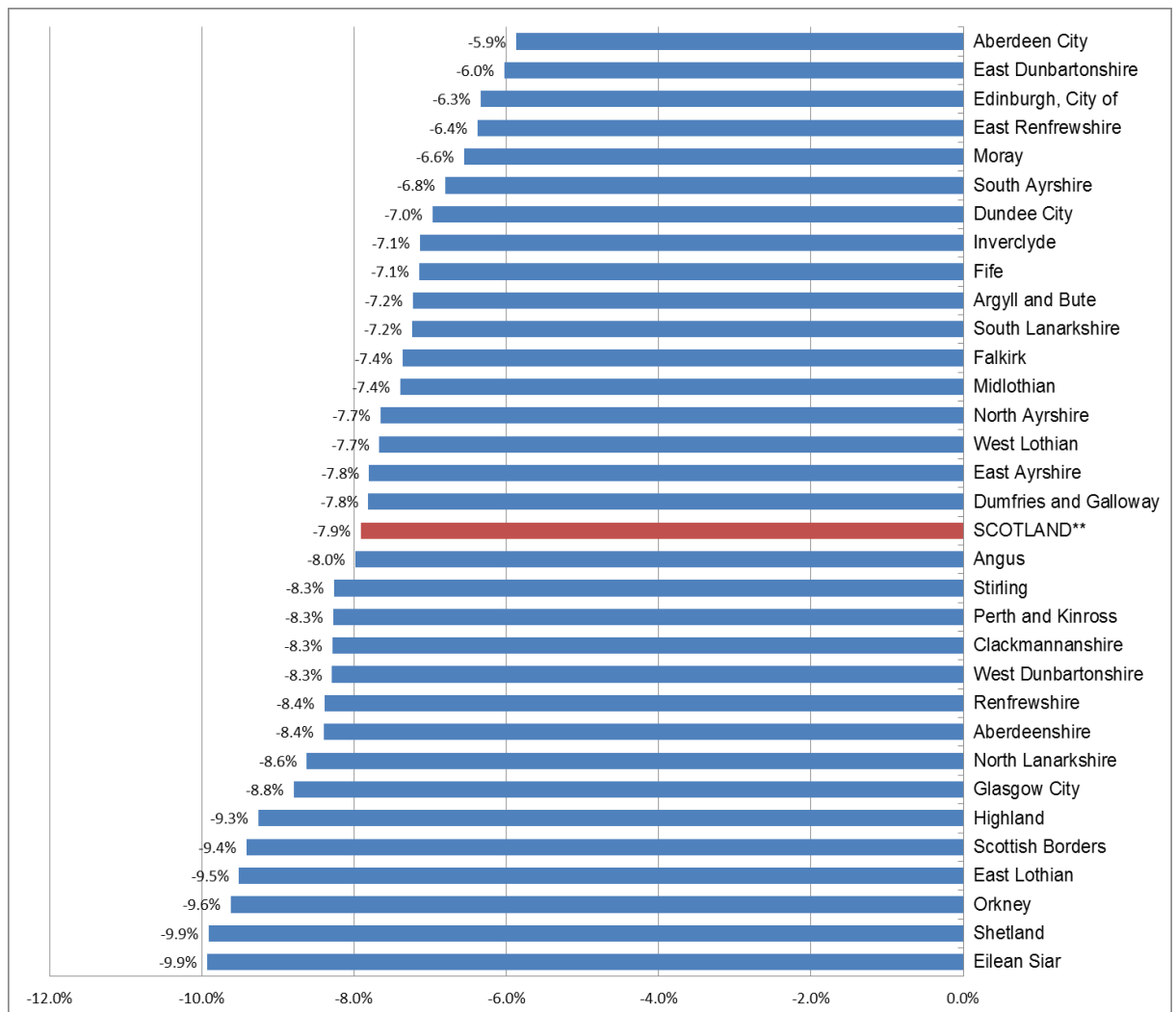
Hodgkinson 2012; Butler 2012; Sergeant 2012; Goldberg 2012; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014; Lansley 2015; Audit Scotland 2016). These difficulties and changes are the biggest in 60 years (Christie 2011).

Despite the rising demand for services, council budgets are subject to long-term annual spending cuts (LGA 2012; Burton 2013; Mackie 2013). While ‘salami-slicing’ (gradually reducing input over time) is applied as a short-term solution by using efficiency savings, it is not a sustainable long-term solution. By the end of this decade councils will be unable to deliver all the services they provide now, so for a long-term solution change is inevitable in what gets delivered at local level and how (CEC 2010a; Atkinson *et al.* 2010; Christie 2011; Ibarra 2011; Mair 2012; LGA 2012; Black (in Aitken 2012); Burton 2013; Audit Scotland 2013a, 2016).

In the form of the Concordat that introduced the Single Outcome Agreement (see sections 2.4 and 3.3.1) the Scottish local authorities agreed to freeze Council Tax rates at 2007-08 levels (Scottish Government 2007b; COSLA 2007). In return they were granted freedom to deliver their agreed outcomes in their own way. The Concordat also referred to a new approach to performance reporting between local government and central government promising clearer reporting on the progress made towards outcomes (Scottish Government 2007b; Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013).

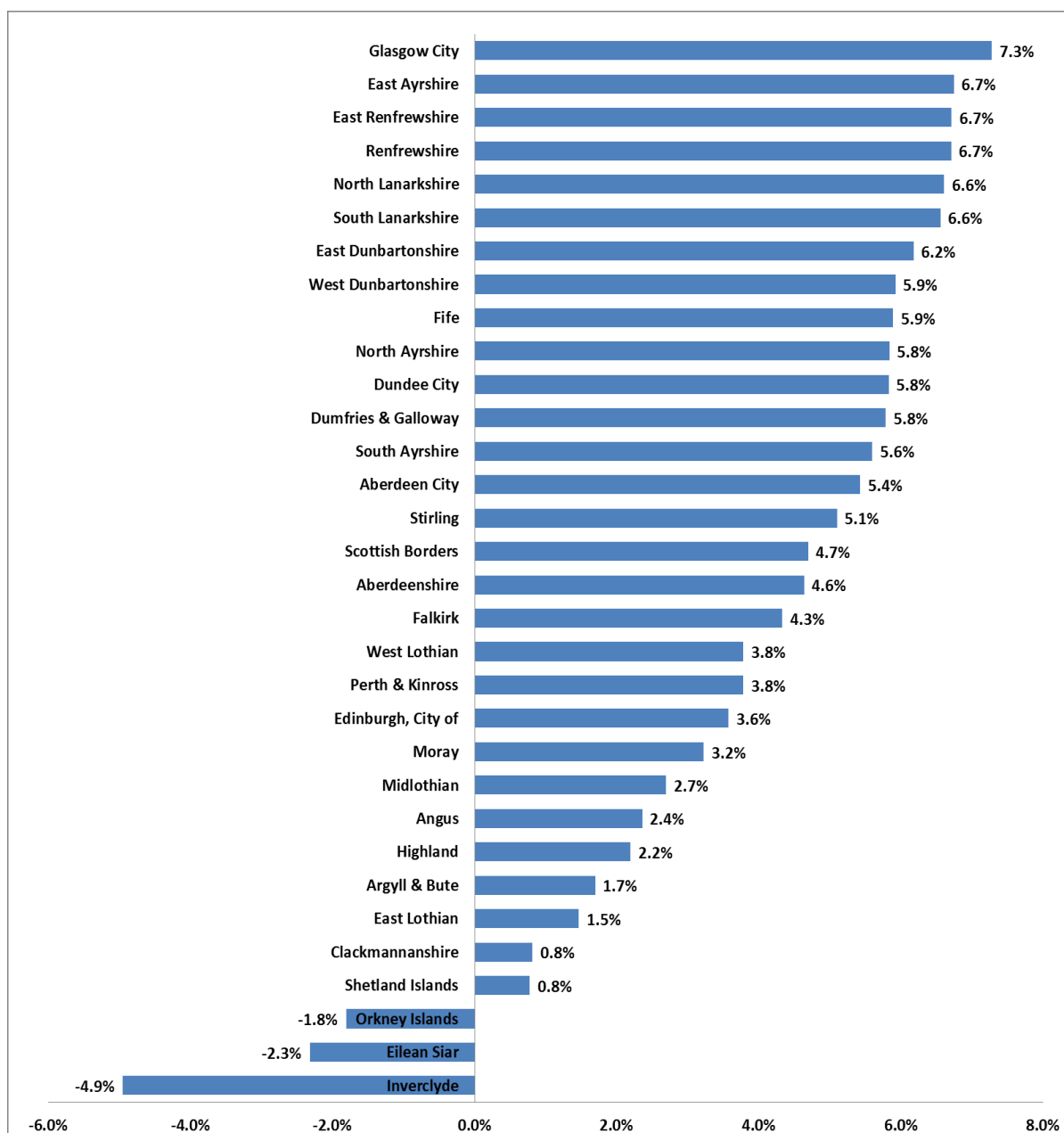
Scottish Government funding accounts for around two-thirds of local government income (Audit Scotland 2011a). Hence local authority spending is controlled by central government (McConnell 2004; Flynn 2007; Grubnic and Woods 2009; Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013). Recognising the drop in funding through the council tax freeze, the Scottish Government provided an additional £70m to local authorities each year from 2008-09 (Campbell 2015), but funding remained tight with no opportunity for a local authority to raise additional revenue locally. The reduction in funds available to Scottish local authorities is clearly shown in the projections in Figures 3.1 and 3.2.

**Figure 3.1: Revenue allocation per person, percentage change in Scottish local authorities between 2011-2015**



**Source: Wakefield and Lodge (2012, p.10.)**

**Figure 3.2: Capital change per person, percentage change in Scottish local authorities from 2011-2016**



Source: Wakefield and Lodge (2012, p.12.)



During these financially challenging times public services attract ‘failure demand’, that is an unnecessary demand that could have been prevented with earlier interventions, which is heavily criticised. (Christie 2011; Mackie 2013). In the absence of a sustainable long-term strategy, any failure to tackle root problems attracts ‘failure demand’. According to Burton (2013, p.3) “the public sector is good at dealing with symptoms but poor at tackling the root causes”. The severity of the problem is highlighted by the fact that Scottish local public services spend around 40 per cent to address short-term ‘failure demand’ (Christie 2011). This is regarded as unsustainable spend when funds are reduced.

The biggest message of the current cuts is to accomplish more with fewer resources (CEC 2010a; LGA 2012; Audit Scotland 2012, 2013a; Accounts Commission 2013). The emphasis is then on the importance of performance: improving organisational and service performance and abolishing any signs of bureaucracy (LGA 2012; Audit Scotland 2013a). Economy, efficiency, and effectiveness all are keys for success (Christie 2011; Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). Black (2000) observes that public service beliefs are stronger in Scotland than in England. While that is open for interpretation, what is evident is that Scottish people have a high regard for their public services (Scottish Government 2011a). They perceive a society with good public services as “the type of society in which they wish to live” (Christie 2011, p.62). This further pressurises the provision of quality public services (Scottish Government 2014b). The cuts threaten the future of public services and are current features of the literature (Christie 2011; Scottish Government 2011a; Mackie 2013; Audit Scotland 2012, 2013b, 2016). Funding cuts will likely have implications for the services delivered at ward level. Although more affluent areas can be expected to notice changes within their local services, their impact might be present more strongly in deprived areas of the ward which have already been heavily dependent on services.

### 3.4.2. NPM and NPG ideas in practice: local governance

The public domain is expected to be run in the cheapest possible way while providing quality and value for money (Painter 2012). Therefore the key components of NPG are sustainability, equality, transparency and accountability (Bovaird and Löffler 2003; Rutter 2011). The recognition of local governance UK wide came when the Treasury revealed in 2004 its plan (called The Future of Local Government) for larger local determination of priorities (Gay 2005; Flynn 2012). Local governance means that local authorities and other local agencies share decision-making and work in partnership. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this has become increasingly popular over the last decades (Cairney 2011; Fenwick *et al.* 2012).

While local government still provides many services, their numbers over the years have significantly decreased as a result of the political decisions made, for instance by privatisation. Over the years these decisions and changes have contributed to local government's role in multi-level governance (Miller and McTavish 2014). As a result local government works via networks with the central government and via collaboration with other sectors at the local and micro level.

Local government accounts for 40 per cent of the public sector's expenditure and is the largest public sector employer (McConnell 2004; Cairney 2011; COSLA 2012). The strain it places on the public purse has been somewhat eased by outsourcing jobs (as a result of market mechanisms) which decreased public service employment (COSLA 2012; Flynn 2012). Local government lost a third of a million jobs between 1981 and 1998 (Flynn 2012). Further job losses have been ongoing since. The reduced Scottish budget also means another 10,000 job losses in local government, a total workforce of 260,000 (COSLA 2015). Before these latest job losses, 60,000 jobs have been already cut since 2009 (Scott 2011a; Mackie 2013; COSLA 2015).

There has over the years been tension between central and local government, and their relationship has yet again become strained due to these cuts (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011). The severity of the problem is illustrated by many like

Cairney (2011), Burton (2013) and Miller and McTavish (2014) who assume that the fiscal challenge will dominate the sector in the foreseeable future. While workforce reduction saves the public's money it is also argued to put extra pressure on existing services and their staff and threaten the future of many services (Cairney 2011; Christie 2011; Moran 2011; Wilks-Heeg 2011; Flynn 2012; Diamond and Liddle 2013).

Partnership working is considered highly influential since it is perceived to build relationships between organisations and the community (Matthews 2012). However, many emphasise that such co-operation as part of co-governance in public services puts pressure on management styles, staff and accountability (Jacobs 2009; Miller *et al.* 2011; Cairney 2011; Fenwick *et al.* 2012; Ellison *et al.* 2012; Mackie 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). Issues like these will be explored during the data collection of this research.

### **3.4.3 Citizens and NPG**

A national survey (2020 Public Services Trust 2010) reveals that the provision of universally available public services is part of the UK and thus Scotland's citizens' identity. The sense of security granted by these services is found to be the most valued. Besemer and Bramley's (2012) UK wide study comes to a similar conclusion. Further service aspects found to be important for citizens are: fairness, customer service standards, local control, accountability, personalisation and choice (Horton 2006; 2020 Public Services Trust 2010; Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011). All these values and expectations are in line with the principles of NPG. Overall, people highly value their local public services and are reliant on them, even more so in underprivileged areas (2020 Public Services Trust 2010). However within the current economic climate, citizens appear to be divided on how providers should respond to the fiscal challenges that the public sector faces, whether to cut service funding or raise taxes. What citizens perceive as most important is to see outcomes from the sector (Simmons *et al.* 2009; 2020 Public Services Trust 2010).

A key idea of NPG is the involvement of citizens at neighbourhood level, the micro level of local government. It is the local government's responsibility to mediate such procedure through Community Planning (Flynn 2012). The intention is to put customers back in charge as active stakeholders and co-producers in the public domain starting at their local community (Osborne 2013). The government aims for greater accountability which is regarded as more visible to localities if residents are more involved in decision-making (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011). Such co-operation in turn allows for local issues to be tackled by the collective locality. This is what is usually called 'bottom up', instead of previously centralised 'top down', decision-making (Christie 2011). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) argue however that public service reforms overwhelmingly continue to be top-down, mainly due to the lack of government funds.

In relation to service users, forums and surveys have been used to better understand their views. Local empowerment is seen as a way to increase commitment, improvement and sustainability in an area's life by granting stakeholders influence on local matters (Matthews 2012, 2013). However this approach brings with it the argument about power disparities: whether affluent areas are more equipped to voice their concerns and thus achieve what they wish than deprived areas that might lack the will and knowledge to participate (Hastings and Matthews 2011).

As regards public services, the public wish neither to be the dictators or the dictated to (Simmons *et al.* 2009). Instead they see a parental relationship with the government where they expect "the government (the parent) to play an enabling, protective and sometimes authoritative role, while respecting our [citizens'] agency and autonomy" (2020 Public Services Trust 2010, p.6). This parental relationship could be more desirable in deprived areas as affluent areas tend to be more self-reliant (Dean and Hastings 2000; Matthews 2012; Matthews and Besemer 2014). A need for reform of public services is also proposed by the public as their confidence in politicians (who ultimately decide over the provision of public services) is low (2020 Public Services Trust 2010; Mackie 2013; Burton 2013). That said, citizens were found to have limited, no deeper than surface, knowledge about public service issues despite the wide pool of participants surveyed. This point is also made by

Duffy (2000) and Shildrick *et al.* (2012) who highlight that deprived areas have many more people with little educational background than other areas. This makes the creation of a balanced, well-rounded change involving the public problematic.

### **3.5 The reforms at ward level**

Many of the needs of disadvantaged areas are somewhat unfulfilled (SIMD 2012, 2016). Despite the various changes, which some identify with the NPM and NPG approaches, services in deprived areas are found to be of lower quality (Duffy 2000; Hastings *et al.* 2005, 2012). Low quality services run contrary to NPM and NPG philosophies which expect high quality, customer-centred service provision. A key aspect of these is the responsibility of service managers to manage and so deliver such goals (Mackie 2013). Yet, many publications agree with the 2020 Public Service Trust (2010) survey that deprived areas receive less satisfactory services than other areas (Department for Social Development 2003; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005; Hastings *et al.* 2005, 2012; Besemer and Bramley 2012; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2013). While the need by the sector for better performance is argued to be timely, it is made more problematic by the sharply increasing demand and expectations of citizens (Duffy 2000; Lipsky 2010). A lack of available funding is also blamed for the shortcoming (Christie 2011; LGA 2012).

Duffy (2000) reinforces the differences in demographics between deprived areas and others and how those characteristics create a large burden on specific in-demand services. Hastings and Matthews (2011) add that public service expectation of people living in underprivileged parts of the country is considerably lower than those living in other parts. One of the underlying problems is that government has not tackled the particular needs of the deprived areas effectively due to not dedicating nearly enough funds over a longer term for significant changes (Duffy 2000; Christie 2011). With Forth Ward's history of multiple deprivations (NEHSG 2011; Pickering 2012) the perceived struggles of a deprived community are described by NESHG (2011, p.3): "Them that works the hardest are the least provided. They [local activists] knew that

none of the improvements to their lives or their community were given willingly but had to be won by their own efforts or their own struggles, usually against entrenched privilege or uncaring bureaucracy”.

Clarke (2002) and Somerville (2011) reason that government should increasingly understand the needs of communities since the public belief is that government needs to take action to renew communities. Opening up local decision-making to locals concerning their area is one aspect of government response. Involving citizens and service users as stakeholders is a key principle of NPG. Bovaird (2011, p.5) notes that “citizens expect their potential role in governance to be appreciated, respected and embedded within decision-making processes - commissioning of public services cannot remain divorced from the priorities of local politicians and uninformed by the wishes of local people”. Residents appear more confident in their power of influence over local services rather than national level decision-making (2020 Public Services Trust 2010; Bovaird 2011; Besemer and Bramley 2012). People in the area they reside in frequently engage on a daily basis with public service provision. Therefore it is at this local level that they feel more able to put forward their opinions and have a greater chance of being listened to. However according to Somerville (2011), the government aims to get citizens to believe that it provides empowerment to communities is mainly deceptive.

A book published by local historians in North Edinburgh covering the deprived parts of Forth Ward appears to critique the level of citizen involvement. It states that “[i]ronically, the policy to promote community engagement and community participation in local communities, appears to have contributed to a decline in community activism in our area” (NESHG 2011, p.44). It is argued that local people feel disappointed by community engagement; it seems to lack the ability to deliver changes that are anticipated by citizens (Matthews 2012, 2013; Cairney and St Denny 2015). Adamson and Bromley (2008) also attest that community empowerment initiatives do not deliver power to the communities and so power remains in the hands of the governing bodies. Dialogue around these outlooks could be foreseen to surface during the data collection of this thesis. It needs to be noted that the new Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015) promises more rights

and involvement for residents. This Act is not yet fully in force so it is too early to reflect on it.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the theoretical background of public services that opened the way for new practices perceived to work towards the betterment of the sector. It has outlined the ideas of NPM and NPG and their influence in public service delivery and in government, at a national and local level. Taking NPM first, an influence of NPM could be viewed in the acknowledgment of service users' right to high quality services and the emphasis on users being at the heart of public services (Cabinet Office 1998; Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011). However whether public services are really centred on their customer has been open for debate.

The changes and complexities brought on by globalisation have resulted in a need for public organisations to be more reactive and flexible (Mackie 2013). Over the years within public service provision the mantra of doing more with less has reflected a significant problem that services face: to cut costs while increasing quality (Painter 2012; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014). One way to do this has been by decentralisation into smaller organisations to increase efficiency and the ability to react quickly to change. Another way has been by the inclusion of the private and third (voluntary) sectors in providing public services. This has become a popular practice at local government level.

The application of private sector methods in the public domain (e.g. being more focused and target-driven to reduce waste) and making it business-like has been reshaping the UK and other Western democracies since the 1980s (Hood 1991; Pollitt 2003). Yet debates still surround the idea of treating the public and private sectors similarly due to their very distinct nature and values (Ranson and Stewart 1994; Horton and Farnham 2002; Magd and Curry 2003; Denhardt and Denhardt 2007). One of the NPM principles is the increased focus on performance and outputs of

services. While such a focus can set out a clear direction, the degree to which measurement of performance can be applicable within the public sector has been challenged (Flynn 2007; Ferlie *et al.* 2007; Fryer *et al.* 2009). For example, the seemingly constant analysis of performance by managers, and their accountability for performance have been viewed as burdens (Horton 2006; Stern 2007; Jong 2009; Mackie 2013). The complex nature of the public sector and performance focus has impacted on managers and their freedom to manage. Moreover, a significant weakness of NPM has been its predominantly intra-organisational focus in a more inclusive world (Osborne 2013).

Turning to NPG, in order to meet these challenges as well as the rising expectations and demand on services, the NPG framework advocates an inter-organisational perspective to public service management (Osborne 2006, 2010, 2013). Networks and collaboration between the public, private, and voluntary sectors are equally important for the betterment of services. Therefore other actors have become policy influencers alongside government (Miller and McTavish 2014). The created pluralism based on partnership work attempts to achieve better results in understanding, serving and empowering citizens. An increased focus on the localism agenda (for instance in the form of Community Planning) collects all local actors and the community in a form of self-determination to deliver sustainability (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010; Flynn 2012; Mackie 2013). The key ideas of NPM and NPG underlined respectively best value and outcome agreements.

In order to renew communities and to understand their needs better, the inclusion of residents in local decision making has been advocated. The chapter argued that local people tend to feel disappointed by community engagement as it seems to lack the ability to deliver changes that are anticipated by citizens (Matthews 2012). The concern is that community empowerment initiatives do not deliver power to the communities and so power remains in the hands of the governing bodies. It is rather top-down and limited in nature (Adamson and Bromley 2008; Somerville 2011). With increased demand for and expectations of services, residents welcome the principle of user-friendly services though services are not always recognised as such (Hastings and Matthews 2011). The type of locality seems to be an influencer.



Community involvement, expectations, and service quality have all shown variance between wealthier and deprived neighbourhoods (Duffy 2000; Department for Social Development 2003; Besemer and Bramley 2012; Hastings *et al.* 2012). Findings show that deprived areas have lower expectations than other areas from their public services and have lower quality services than other areas (Dean and Hastings 2000; Hastings and Matthews 2011).

The following chapter focuses on the ways in which performance measurement is undertaken within public service provision. The various benefits as well as challenges that the process brings will also be studied.

## **Chapter Four - Performance measurement**

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### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on performance measurement and how it is undertaken within public service delivery. As performance measurement traditionally has been the manager's job (Pollitt 1990; Hood 1991; Rose and Lawton 1999), the chapter explores the roles that local managers typically undertake throughout the process. It highlights where they have a greater, or lesser, involvement. The task of target setting, the roles of indicators, and the three Es are explained in detail. How managers report on data, their accountability and how they evaluate and deliver quality services are all discussed in this chapter. Throughout, the chapter sets out the benefits of performance measurement, and the particular challenges and limitations that it brings for services.

#### **4.1.1 Performance measurement: introduction**

Performance has received more and more attention since the reinventing government movement of the 1980s (Nutley and Osborne 1994; Gianakis 2002; Propper and Wilson 2003). Since then the UK government, through for example the Modernising Government White Paper (1999), have declared aims for high quality, efficient public services. With the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, for Scotland performance has remained just as important (Black 2000; Scottish Parliament 2000; Scottish Government 2007a; McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011; Campbell 2012; Booker 2012). Appendix Three gives an introduction to performance measurement in Scotland.

As the taxpayers fund public services, performance within the public domain has its origins in providing value for money (Gardner 1998; Lester 2001; Fryer *et al.* 2009;

Mackie 2013). Reducing costs, increasing quality of service and citizen satisfaction all have been central parts of performance (Eden and Hyndman 1999; Boyle 2000; Boyne *et al.* 2006; Sanger 2008; Flynn 2007; Roe 2012). These have been influenced by the rising demand and expectations of citizens (Sergeant 2012; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014) as well as the economic climate in which public services operate (Butler 2012; Audit Scotland 2012; Judge 2013).

Performance measurement traditionally has been the manager's job (Pollitt 1990; Hood 1991; Rose and Lawton 1999). This chapter explores the roles that local managers typically undertake when measuring performance. It highlights where they have a greater, or lesser, involvement. The particular challenges that are faced are also set out as well as the developments for example in citizen involvement.

## **4.2 Setting targets and measures**

Traditionally, though 'management' sets targets and measures, local managers may or may not be involved. Performance targets are quantified, time-bound, and organisation-specific objectives (Eden and Hyndman 1999; Reeves 2008). In order to be able to measure (or keep track on variations over time), a target is assigned to a particular measure (Shaheen 2013). Mostly there are four favoured categories that organisations like to set targets in: financial performance, output, quality of service, and efficiency (Hyndman 1997). Organisations generally measure by comparing outputs against inputs, and strategic objectives against outcomes (Scott 2007).

Table 4.1 reviews what performance elements can be measured, making it possible to assign targets to them, and indicates associated risks in the public sector. These will be explored further in this chapter.

**Table 4.1: Measuring organisational performance**

<b>Elements of Performance</b>	<b>The meaning of the term (based on Lockett 1992)</b>	<b>Associated risks (based on Seddon 2008)</b>
Strategic objectives	The purpose or aim of the organisation	Often these are set out in ways that ensure their fulfilment.
Inputs	What the organisation needs in order to achieve its purpose i.e. assets, finance, people, skills.	Inputs are selected with the targets in mind thus often not with the real remit of public needs in mind.
Outputs	Services/products the organisation delivers. They can be measured (i.e. volume, quality, price).	Due to being measurability focused, often outputs are used as indicators.
Processes	The ways in which input becomes output. It is important to review them and align them to the strategic objectives of the organisation.	These are to ensure the targets are being met rather than to solve the problems once and for all.
Outcomes	Different from outputs. They are the impact and/or consequence of performance and cannot be controlled directly (e.g. user satisfaction).	A lower level of potential outcomes will be achieved when an organisation's primary focus is accomplishing its targets.

**Sources: Lockett (1992) and Seddon (2008)**

Public sector organisations have various factors affecting their performance and outcomes (Jarrar and Schiuma 2007). In the field of community education this could be more prominent due to factors that management of the service has no control over (Weiss 1998). The subjectivity of services for instance can mean that a person's circumstances will have a great role to play in their ability to learn/participate. This means that setting targets can be quite complex (Lockett 1992; McAdam *et al.* 2002; Talbot 2010). Targets may be set centrally but are achieved and monitored locally, at ward level. Even if organisations meet their targets there could be other factors

contributing to the achievements of a service (Propper and Wilson 2003; Adcroft and Willis 2005; Dicker 2010). This is where the knowledge and skills of the local manager are important. Familiarity with service aims and awareness of the operations are factors that can help understanding of what targets actually represent. Local managers need to question rather than simply accept targets and measures (Thomas 2006). They are arguably in the best position to determine what the targets should be. The primary data collection provides an opportunity to investigate how this translates in practice.

Through the NPM principles (see Chapter Three) concentrating on inputs turned into focusing on outputs (Pollitt 1990, 2003; Hood 1991) The NPG philosophies have also highlighted the benefits of outcomes as compared to outputs (Osborne 2010). However it seems that in practice targets and their reporting are frequently used only to show a small snippet of a service, and still focus on outputs, rather than on the whole picture of what the service achieves or contributes to (outcomes). Ammons (2010) describes this as an unhelpful yet common attitude within the public sector. Even where local managers appear to have involvement in the choice of targets the attitude is: “[j]ust collect some measures we can report to the city council and citizens – ideally, something that will impress them with how much we do” (Ammons 2010, p.63). This narrow approach leads to narrow performance reporting and focusing primarily on easily available/collectable data such as the amount of litter collected or the number of calls received (Ammons 2010; Zakaria *et al.* 2011). This does not benefit the users or the providers in the longer term (Eden and Hyndman 1999; Lester 2001; Scott 2007; Atkinson *et al.* 2010; Dicker 2010; Shaheen 2013). Mackie (2008) thus urges for greater emphasis on outcome focus in performance measurement. It could be damaging especially for deprived areas like parts of Forth Ward, if those characteristics which do not need to be reported are not dealt with, even if they are local concerns.

It could be argued that with the application of performance measurement the public sector has aimed not to maintain the status quo but rather improve by making the sector more accountable and responsive (Gianakis 2002; Talbot 2007, 2010). However some critics question whether measurement of performance within the

public sector really leads to improvements or better results (Bouckaert and Balk 1991; Poister 2003; Adcroft and Willis 2005; Seddon 2008; Ammons 2010; Baines 2013). Eden and Hyndman (1999, p.12) explain: “performance orientation has helped to establish the myth that public sector organisations have a sense of direction and an explicable rationale for their actions. This myth is reinforced by the rituals of performance measurement and reporting”. There is a debate whether the sense of wanting to meet targets by the commonly referred to ‘box-ticking attitude’ alienates services from their purpose. Supporting this view is the literature where many others also reason that in public services for outcomes to show a longer term is often required which targets cannot capture due to their short-term nature (Gardner 1998; Talbot 2007; Reeves 2008; Dicker 2010). The research will investigate how this plays out in practice in the ward.

Managers are constantly under pressure to show that targets are met hence that they are performing well. The literature warns managers about target setting as if they are set too high or low it demotivates (Lockett 1992; Seddon 2008). In cases when there is a feeling that targets are not achievable some managers engage in ‘gaming’ to ensure continued income from funders (Scott 2007; Talbot 2007; Ammons 2007). Gaming, in other words game-playing or massaging the figures, involves setting targets low or collecting easily measurable measures (Dicker 2010). Designing services in a way to fulfil targets and funder requirements make services worse (Seddon 2008). While it provides a false picture on real operations (Broeckling 2010), Ammons (2010) hints that it is a frequent feature of services. One way to reduce gaming is via periodical review to follow up on the data (Lester 2001; Atkinson *et al.* 2010). Multidimensional targets could be another way to diminish gaming to reduce the risk that the attention is often to fulfil immediate targets instead of wider objectives (Propper and Wilson 2003).

Available support for managers is viewed as having a direct link to meeting targets. Often the reason why targets are not met is blamed on the lack of strategy and guidance in performance documents provided to managers on how to deal with targets (Scott 2007). It is argued to be the case not only with targets but with performance generally. Management of performance is considered habitually to lack

a clear plan which organisations could follow (Adcroft and Willis 2005; Greiling 2006). Managers of services where performance is not easily visible (i.e. subjective programmes) are said to be affected the most. They tend to struggle with finding the link between input and outcome (McKevitt and Lawton 1994; Weiss 1998; Radnor and Barnes 2007). How community education services acknowledge this problem would clarify how beneficial performance measurement is at the local level where ordinary people access and engage with services.

While targets aim to bring into sharp relief a service and its progress, there are many concerns with targets in the public domain (Talbot 2010; Shaheen 2013). That is why the role of the local managers is vital in bringing their understanding of their services, and the long-term impact they wish the service to achieve. Having a say in setting targets, and thus influencing this initial process, should prove beneficial to service operations. It is one of the research interests of this study to find out how organisations in the ward set their targets and whether this is done by the local service managers.

#### **4.3 The use of performance indicators**

The importance of indicators (often referred to as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)) is that they reveal the level to which targets are met (Boyle 2000; Boland and Fowler 2000; Bruijn 2002; Dicker 2010; Zakaria *et al.* 2011). They inform and help to focus organisational attention on its main objectives (Eden and Hyndman 1999). Their function is twofold. They provide a snapshot on performance and indicate factors that need further attention (Mackie 2008). Many benefits can be detected when indicators are well set, monitored and reported. As indicators highlight the priorities of the service and enable comparisons with others, they can lead to better service provision (Adnum 1993; Burtonshaw-Gunn and Salameh 2010; Zakaria *et al.* 2011). The views of managers on indicators will be an important aspect of the research.



Stemming from the same argument as earlier outlined in the case of targets, many question the validity, effectiveness and capability of indicators within the public domain (McKevitt and Lawton 1994; Royal Statistical Society 2005; Seddon 2008; Mackie 2008, 2013). Misunderstanding and thus misusing them is one of the biggest criticisms they receive. For example, it could be misleading to focus through an indicator on a service area that appears to need attention when the issue could be more complicated to address. Whether indicators help or hinder local managers to measure performance will be questioned during the data collection.

Rather than being definitive, the government's outcome focused approach (i.e NPF see Appendix Three) favours indicators as guiding tools since outcomes are not easily measurable (Grainger (no date); Mackie 2013). Being clear and linked to outcomes are key necessities of indicators (Waal and Counet 2009; Grubnic and Woods 2009). Outcomes are understood after the consideration of very many KPIs. Assessing an indicator separately (rather than collectively) often leads to reading too much into it, which is noted as a common problem amongst management (Gardner 1998; Thomas 2006; Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012). Assessing collectively reveals the bigger picture on operation and is fundamental for the purposes of accurate measurement (Claytonsmith 2003; Burtonshaw-Gunn and Salameh 2010).

Indicators are often still not set in relation to outcomes. The literature notes the misleading practice of assigning indicators against outputs since those are easier to measure (Boland and Fowler 2000; Setton 2008). Also, there is a debate that there are too many performance indicators which complicates their assessment (Scott 2007; Zakaria *et al.* 2011; Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012). The challenge is to identify enough appropriate indicators to demonstrate progress on outcomes.

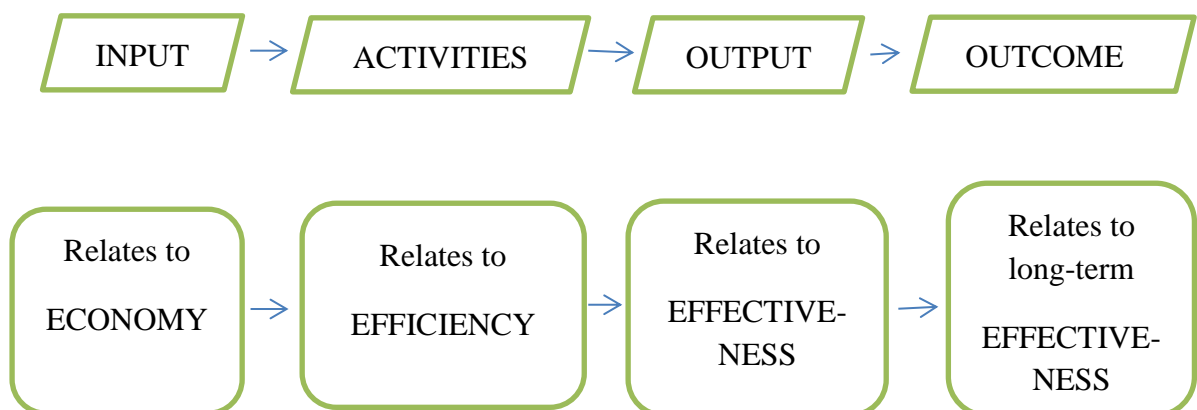
There seem to be still many top-down, centrally predetermined indicators that service providers need to follow (Scott 2007; Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012; Mackie 2013). Ward/local level performance measurement ties into these central indicators. Scott (2007) argues that it is the central government that determines the categories and definitions that fit under them (e.g. what categorises

deprivation). The local government, based on central guidelines, will implement the indicators to deal with the matter (Grainger (no date); Scott 2007). Such guidelines will determine what happens at local and also at the most local government level, the ward level. This makes the process more top down rather than bottom up. Predetermined indicators might pose a risk of not being representative of local people's concerns (Scott 2007). Thus local managers' hands could be tied in terms of what aspects of their service they can measure and so follow up.

#### 4.4 Three Es

Performance is about economic, efficient and effective operations (Gianakis 2002; Magd and Currie 2003; McAdam *et al.* 2011). These are often referred to as the three Es and are common features of the public service performance literature (Nutley and Osborne 1994; Gardner 1998; Boland and Fowler 2000; Flynn 2012). Managers will aim to evidence their services' engagement with the three Es through undertaking performance measurement. Aligning services with the three Es is supposed to aid better performance. However Baines (2013) warns that practitioners often do not understand the differences between the three Es and their meaning. Figure 4.1 illustrates the use of the three Es in service operations. This research will ask service managers about the importance of three Es in relation to performance.

**Figure 4.1: The progression of performance (Adapted from Horton and Farnham (2002))**



#### 4.4.1. Economy

Economy relates to input (see Figure 4.1). It is about better resource allocation by the cheapest way: providing value for money while maintaining quality (Gardner 1998; Magd and Currie 2003; Greiling 2006). Economy is arguably the easiest of the three Es to measure due to it representing the cost of input which can be measured for instance by means of budget, staff and general costs (Greiling 2006). It aims to account for where taxpayers' money is spent and on what, and what impact and quality is achieved (Hyndman 1997; Timmins 1998).

A focus on improving public services has been a constant subject in the literature long before the current economic crisis (Mackie 2013) although the uncertainty surrounding public service provision due to the financial constraints most of them experience means that in recent years economy has been at the heart of public service operations (Christie 2011; Flynn 2012; Mackie 2013; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014).

The UK public sector is forecasted to face many more years of funding cuts (Butler 2012; Flynn 2012; Robinson 2012). As outlined in section 3.4.1 in Scotland despite the rising demand for public services their funds are not expected to meet their 2010 level again until well into the 2020s (Scott 2010; Scottish Government 2010; CEC 2010a; Christie 2011; Hodgkinson 2012; CEC 2012a; Butler 2012; Sergeant 2012; Goldberg 2012; McLaren 2013; Burton 2013). This duality of increased demand and decreased funds could impact on ward level community education services.

The funding cuts are thought to hit deprived areas the hardest as wealthier areas can afford to find alternatives in place of a specific public service (Hastings *et al.* 2012). Local and thus ward level services are constantly under pressure and uncertainty (Connected Communities 2011; Hastings *et al.* 2012). This might have implications for areas like Forth Ward with multiple deprivations where a wide variety of public services are provided (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005; Roe 2012).

As managers aim to help others by providing their services, these cuts can create very difficult working conditions for service providers (Diamond and Liddle 2013). Within their service operations this can mean fewer resources, reduced number of staff and/or working hours (Scott 2011a; Flynn 2012; Robinson 2013; Scottish Government 2014a).

#### **4.4.2 Efficiency**

Efficiency is to do with a service's activities. It is often on the basis of economy and efficiency that what gets delivered at local and neighbourhood level is determined (Grubnic and Woods 2009; Bovaird in Connected Communities 2011). They can be compared and followed up more easily. In the case of subjective, intangible service provision such as community education services and their outcomes, economy and efficiency measurement is argued to be unsuccessful (Heinrich 2003; Collier 2008; Hartley *et al.* 2008; Halachmi 2011; Bovaird in Connected Communities 2011). Such services often require further input which is likely not to be cost effective based on economic and efficiency measures alone. Baines (2013) condemns the commonly held view that good measures of efficiency can only be finance related, fuelling competitiveness amongst public organisations.

While in the past savings were introduced on the basis of being more efficient currently it is thought that efficiency savings alone cannot be maintained or carried out any further under the current economic conditions so posing a real challenge (Christie 2011; Hastings *et al.* 2012; Besemer and Bramley 2012).

#### **4.4.3 Effectiveness**

Effectiveness relates to outputs and long-term effectiveness to outcomes. In the context of the debate that public services are problematic to measure, effectiveness is

argued to be the most difficult to measure (Radnor and Barnes 2007; Flynn 2007, 2012). While efficiency is defined as the resources used in order through activities to produce an output, effectiveness is concerned with the appropriateness of processes for reaching the output (Radnor and Barnes 2007; Ruzita *et al.* 2012). Hence effectiveness involves the focus on a broader set of measures in order to address whether a service meets its aims (Lane 1993).

An understanding of the overall effectiveness of a service in the short term and over time is, however, often missing. A wider understanding of efficiency and effectiveness in order to improve services is necessary (Baines 2013). With shrinking public sector funds the focus on outcomes (as opposed to outputs) has also come to the fore as part of a drive to make operations sustainable and make the most of what is available (Radnor and Barnes 2007; Fryer *et al.* 2009; Flynn 2012).

This has many implications though ultimately the long-term decreasing budget creates the biggest problem in present-time public services as it threatens their continuity (Christie 2011).

#### **4.4.4 A fourth E?**

Many like Gardner (1998) and Flynn (2007) add a fourth E: equity. Equity represents the equality of access to services and the fair nature of their provision (Boyle 2000). Savas (1978) identified four areas of equity that can be applicable in local service provision: equal payment, outputs, inputs, and satisfaction of demand.

At ward level, community education could have the potential to work towards making the area better and thus create public value by delivering what is important for locals, what they value (Moore 1995). It provides lifelong learning that can lead to the prosperity of an area by improving people's quality of life and possibly reducing inequality (Edwards *et al.* 1993). The level of impact community education can achieve and the degree to which it can reduce inequality has been debated by many like Ledwith (2011). Its influence is thought to be dependent on a number of

issues (e.g. accessibility, funding issues and time constraints). It is the managers' role to incorporate in their services the values identified by the public associated with the service (Nabatchi 2010). Such inclusion of locally determined values is further justified by the increased interest of the public in having an explanation of how their money is being spent and how the services help them (Simmons *et al.* 2009). See section 3.4.3. Such matters could be raised by the interviewees in Forth Ward. Finding out whether managers feel that their services meet the users' needs and how they justify that they do meet these needs is thus an important facet of the research.

The work of a local service manager is to conform to the policy objectives determined by political agendas, of the local authority or central government. The manager also has to react to the user's specific needs. This is what Lipsky (2010) calls 'paradoxical reality': treating all citizens the same while being responsive to an individual's case when the need arises from the individual. Their decisions and actions are the real life public policies: public policy in action. Hastings and Matthews' (2011) research supports Lipsky's observation. They find this tension to be more prevalent where the users are middle class citizens as seemingly they are more influential in their use of public services. Potentially this may impact on local service policies and practice. Whether in the affluent part of the ward people feel they have influence on their services will be also examined during the data collection.

#### **4.5 Gathering and reporting on data**

Collecting the right type of data to apply it as the baseline for adjustments is what performance management is about (Eden and Hyndman 1999; Sanger 2008; Armstrong 2009). While previously inputs and processes were deemed significant to monitor, with the NPM and NPG principles the output and outcome focus has emerged. These seek to measure what is achieved by a programme or service (Talbot 2007). At ward level a focus on outcomes and an understanding of results is

important for future planning and direction of services (Scott 2007). However there are challenges.

Outcomes are generally long-term, the more so in subjective and complex services such as community education (Ledwith 2011; Bovaird in Connected Communities 2011). The results and influences of a programme might show only later on. Measurement is focused on a certain period of time ranging from quarterly, half yearly, yearly to the length of the programme. Often such a relatively short period cannot track achievement of the outcome (Dicker 2010). The appearance of an outcome might fall outside the timeframe of the measurement process and thus go unnoticed (Scott 2007). The research will enquire of local service managers how outcome focused ward service performance management practices are and what their experiences are as to timescales.

One of the criticisms of current measures is that predominantly 'hard', easy to measure, quantitative measures are favoured for collection (Thomas 2006; Dicker 2010). Habitually organisations opt for hard indicators despite those not being in sync with the users' needs. Such measures can be for instance sex, age, numbers of participants, etc. 'Soft' qualitative measures that characterise complex, society-related programmes such as community education services are more difficult to assess (Adnum 1993; Thomas 1996; Ledwith 2011). Even though they reveal more about such services than hard measures their applications is not widespread (Thomas 2006). Realising this, Christie (2011) urged that reliable data collection be carried out, that unearths more about the service than just statistical, numerical values.

If measuring hinders and does not support the understanding and meeting of local needs it can create further problems. Finding out what type of data ward managers collect is central to understanding what they are required to prioritise on. Services might be skewed towards programmes that are more readily quantified (Adnum 1993; Bruijn 2002; Scott 2007; Burchett 2010). The primary research will enquire how community education services are measured and whether there is pressure on management to set up hard programmes that can be quantified. The level of the local managers' involvement in such decisions could reflect whether the process is still top down (Scott 2007) or has moved toward being more bottom up.

Once the data has been gathered, there is the question of how to report it. The use of the 'traffic light system' for revealing the state of indicators is a popular method as it allows for quick and easily understood reporting (Mackie 2013). In order to reap the benefits that indicators bring, managers need to be supported and trained in how to monitor indicators and what actions to take. Otherwise Mwita (2000) warns that performance measurement could be achieved without quality.

#### **4.5.1 Reporting accountability**

As well as reporting data to funders and the council for accountability and scrutinising purposes, it is also the job of management to report on performance to service users. Managers are accountable from both the council and the customer side, each with often dissimilar expectations of the service (Scott 2007; Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011). Reporting is to communicate to residents clearly the work and results achieved by their local services. While in deprived areas people perhaps are more disengaged by being preoccupied with matters impacting on their own lives (Duffy 2000; Murray 2001; Hastings *et al.* 2005) they might like to find out what and how their local services are doing. For this, making sure the communication reaches them and is readily understandable is important. In more privileged areas people might find out by themselves even without having the results presented to them (Matthews 2013; Matthews and Besemer 2014). They are found to be more empowered and have the skills that many in deprived areas usually lack (Hastings and Matthews 2011; Hastings *et al.* 2012; Matthews and Besemer 2014). Whether locals feel their services communicate with them or they need to discover data themselves if they wish to know will be explored in the research.

Another issue is the time taken on data gathering and reporting. According to the literature employees end up spending too much time collecting and documenting data (Gianakis 2002; Fryer *et al.* 2009; Grubnic and Woods 2009). This is underpinned by Scott's (2007) research that agrees managers' time has been significantly reduced for actually managing their service. Recording, showcasing performance data and filling



out paperwork can be a time-consuming drain on managers' time (Collier 2008; Dicker 2010). Having multiple funders for a service by involving all three sectors in public service delivery (see section 3.4 on the NPG principles) is argued to complicate managers' performance tasks. Habitually it is noted that different funders expect measurement to be carried out differently which takes up further time to complete (Scott 2007). Such burdens lead managers to feeling their services are unmanageable and overstrained (Le Grand 2004; Horton 2006; Jong 2009; Lipsky 2010).

Apart from time constraints, the actual ways in which managers need to manage performance is also argued to continue to have bureaucratic tendencies. Those tendencies are perceived to limit managers' role and make managers more accountable (Mwita 2000; Horton 2006; Lipsky 2010). An increased focus on measurement rather than on performing, the many measures used, and the administrative tasks are viewed to be prime examples of the rigidity of the system (Ball 2000; Talbot 2007; Burchett 2010). From the managers' perspective the problem with the rigidity of the system is that it is described as hindering innovation and ambition. This can potentially lead to de-professionalising managers as they will not capitalise on their skills (Bruijn 2002; Adcroft and Willis 2005; Mackie 2005; Radnor and Barnes 2007; Sanger 2008). It could be argued that these issues would be present and impact on the management tasks at ward level. Whether this is the case in Forth Ward will be tested during the primary research.

## **4.6 Evaluation**

While local managers may take an interest in the data gathered, they also have to send it to others for evaluation. Evaluation is concerned with facilitating sustained service quality (Powell 2006). It measures the perceived impact of a service against its pre-set goals (Weiss 1972, 1995). This kind of activity tends to be undertaken by senior management and reported by them to others such as politicians, whether on the local council or in central government.

Commentators like Stern (2007) assert that local managers should be accountable because the success or failure of a service is dependent on its management. This view seems to overlook a few factors. First, that with the contribution of all three sectors, public, private and voluntary, to the provision of public services, there could be multiple funders with different ideas and expectations from a service (Collier 2008; Osborne 2010). This could make operations more complicated for service managers. Second, services and programmes are created and upheld by political decisions (McConnell 2004; Simmons *et al.* 2009). Politics will have an influence on evaluation as will social and geographical contexts (Blamey and Mackenzie 2007). Third, a service like community education is multidimensional which requires clear direction, strategy and forward planning that are often lacking (Msila and Seklhako 2013). Fourth, despite the intentions and skills of the manager, there are influences the manager cannot have control over (Weiss 1998). These could be staff turnover, or outside influences such as the complex needs and rising demand from locals in the ward.

Evaluation procedures and tools are not always suitable for recognising the deeper underlying issues behind services and their programmes (Weiss 1998). These may not give an indication of the outcomes or any underlying issues relating to the outcomes. Community programmes tend not to be based on a clear, implied theory; most of the time they are vague and easily shift over time (Edwards 1993; Weiss 1995; Weiss in Harvard Family Research Project 1998; Ledwith 2011). This is why the outcomes and success of a programme can greatly vary, seemingly without evaluators fully understanding why. Justifying the value a service provides could be a challenge for managers in the ward. There is also an argument as to whether local managers should be held responsible where for example they act, unproductively, upon their perception of results (Weiss 1998). Continuous evaluation is seen to help to provide knowledge (Brickmayer and Weiss 2000; Msila and Setlhako 2013).

The basis for community education programmes is that they target people's general knowledge and way of behaving by offering social support and an environment in which further learning can take place (Ward 2008; Adamson and Bromley 2008; Ledwith 2011). The evaluation of the success of this previously was done by

quantitative measures. As this provided little meaning, with time, qualitative methods have spread (Powell 2006). Qualitative practices can reveal more about the subjective user experience. Programme evaluations tend to report on service users' knowledge, progress and behaviour. Since local managers gather the data for the evaluation process, any strategic planning could benefit from the involvement of their knowledge (Weiss 1998). Whether at local level managers' views influence planning and whether they evaluate by qualitative means will be tested in the primary research.

Many like Robinson (2012) advise the use of performance data to redesign public services to make them more resilient for the future. This requires the performance measurement process especially evaluation and then future planning to reflect the managers' knowledge and input. Equally, others perceive that reducing inequality and socioeconomic imbalances could potentially lessen the demand for services (Murray 2001; Blamey and Mackenzie 2007; Matthews 2013; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2013). For this community education is a key driver. It needs to be sustained especially throughout the uncertain economic times when funding is mainly provided to those services viewed as priority (Ly 2010; Hastings *et al.* 2012).

#### **4.7 Quality management**

Improving management in the public sector is described as a "wicked problem" (Horton and Farnham 2002, p.76) since it is complex, inflexible and unclear. This is why the data from performance measurement is supposed to provide some guidance. The difficulty of measuring quality in the public sector poses challenges for its management (Adnum 1993; Nutley and Osborne 1994; Horton and Farnham 2002). Quality management is customer centred and assists services to strive for better performance (Mwita 2000; Magd and Currie 2003). Therefore it should involve customers.

#### 4.7.1 Citizen involvement

One of the recommendations of the Christie (2011) Commission was that services should not be provided by ‘top-down’ administration. Services must serve those who need them (Lipsky 2010; Simmons *et al.* 2009, 2011; Connected Communities 2011). When planning and delivering them these people need to be directly involved in providing opinions on their local service provision (Christie 2011; Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015).

The National Performance Framework (NPF), introduced by the Scottish Government in consultation with local authorities and others, sets out the focus and direction for the country (McGarvey and Cairney 2008; Cairney 2011; Mackie 2013) (see Appendix Three). As mentioned in Chapter Two, it is imposed and tailored to each local authority in a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) between the Scottish Government and that local authority. The risk may be that there is less opportunity for local people’s views to exercise influence (see section 3.4.3). At local level, Scott (2007) and Adamson and Bromley (2008) note that even if there is community involvement in the form of consultation, the final decisions are always decided by experts in accordance with the policy. Hence it could be argued that control does not lie at ward level but at the top level. Whether over time power is being devolved to ward level perhaps as a response to Christie’s (2011) recommendations will be explored via the primary data collection.

Citizen involvement is recognised to benefit local services. Citizen engagement is found to lead to achieving better outcomes and is a fundamental building block of democracy (Nabatchi 2010). It is not only beneficial to the future of the services but can also lead to positive changes in the relationship of locals and providers and reduces apathy (Hastings *et al.* 2005; Nabatchi 2010; Matthews 2012).

Involving citizens in decision-making is not without critics. Amongst other criticisms it is viewed as costly and at times unjust when it puts one powerful person’s view above another’s (Cairney and St Denny 2015). Many also question the level of knowledge that citizens generally possess and so overestimate their ability to

contribute (Seddon 2008). However for improved public service delivery understanding what users and residents hold dear and value is required. This understanding is what has also been referred to as public value (Moore 1995; Nabatchi 2010; Meynhardt and Bartholomes 2011). It is only then that managers are in a position to incorporate those values into and plan services accordingly (Christie 2011).

Service quality is perceived as the expectations of users and their views on service performance (Powell 2006; Gary and Guy 2013). In the case of deprived areas users are often less vocal and knowledgeable about their expectations and the performance of their services (Simmons *et al.* 2009; 2020 Public Services Trust 2010; Shildrick *et al.* 2012). If managers lack users' input, justifying what quality means in their services might be problematic. In such matters it is argued that managers' personal interaction with users could prove productive in understanding them and their expectations (Lipsky 2010). Whether managers value face to face interactions with users for enhancing quality will be tested within the primary research. It will also be part of the interview themes to ask how managers in the ward demonstrate that they deliver quality services.

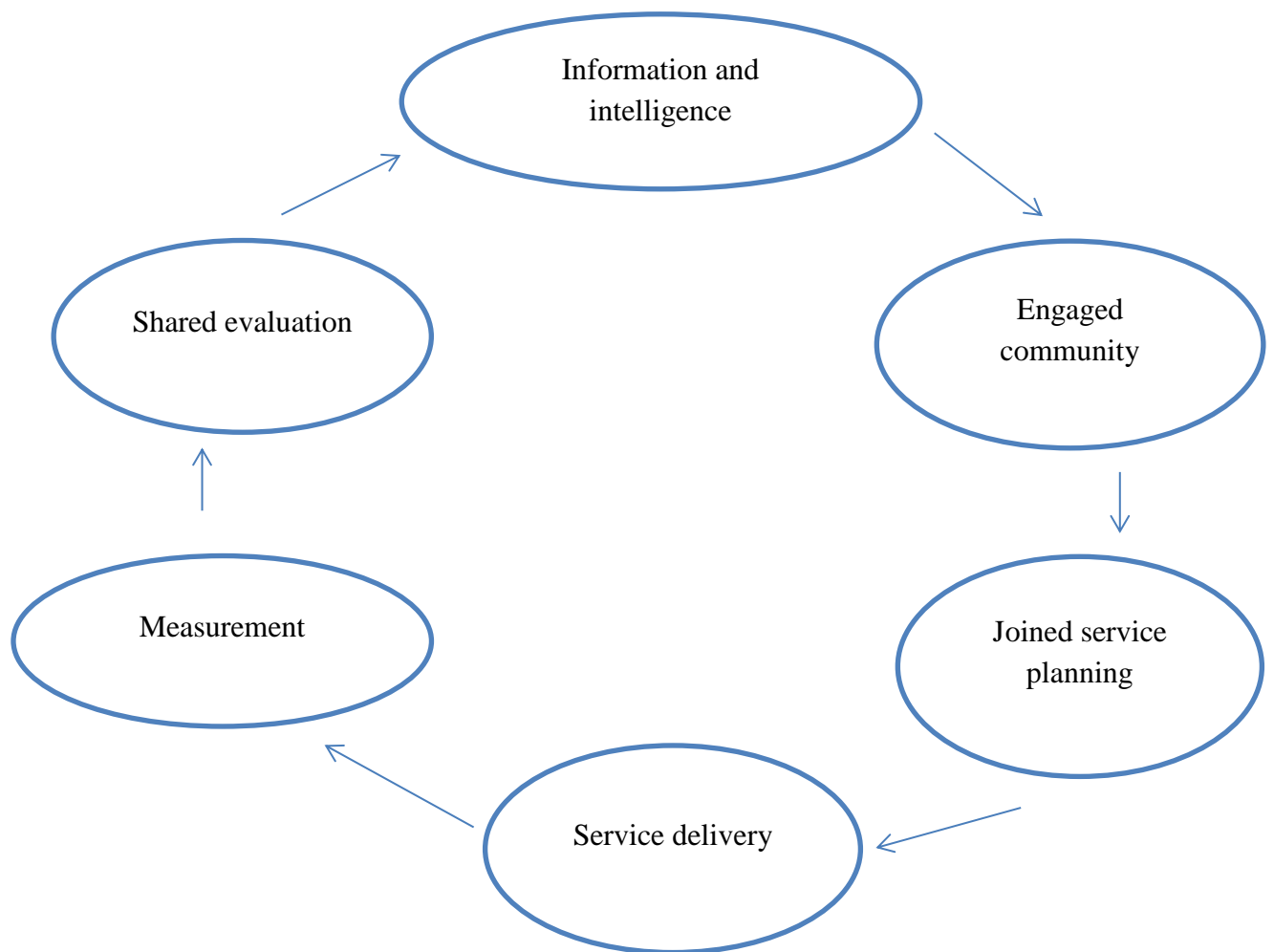
As Chapter Two noted, communicating openly between residents and the local authority is one of the key elements for community involvement and partnership work (Hastings *et al.* 2005; Goldberg 2012). Language is perceived to be a barrier in this communication (Scott 2007). The language often used for consultations with local residents leaves them bewildered by what is said. That is because residents frequently do not understand the terms the council usually opts to use (Shuy 1998; Lynch and Cruise 2006; Scott 2007). This is foreseen as one of the issues that could arise from the service user interviews in the ward.

Encouraging partnership work amongst local organisations is a necessity for delivering combined services that achieve outcomes (Christie 2011). As mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, since 2007 one of the ways in which Scotland has tried to involve local people, and encourage partnership work, is through Community Planning Partnerships (CPP). In order to improve areas and the local people's lives and to build better relationships between authorities and citizens, there are CPPs

within the 32 councils (Fairer Scotland Fund 2008; Edinburgh Partnership 2013). For Edinburgh it is the Edinburgh Partnership (Edinburgh Partnership 2011). CPPs aim to achieve the best outcomes possible by delivering citizen centred services through the cooperation of the council and other public bodies. The concept could be seen as aspirational and, in reality, CPPs have yet to make a significant change. Matthews (2012) found little contribution from CPPs. This finding is reinforced again in Matthews and Besemer's (2014) study in which CPPs had shown minimal impact on building social networks and tackling poverty. John Swinney (2015), Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy (2007-2016), too acknowledged that CPPs are yet to fulfil their potential. Whether Forth Ward managers work with the city level of partnership (Edinburgh Partnership) present in the ward in the form of Forth Neighbourhood Partnership, and whether they find it beneficial will be explored in the data collection of the research.

Fundamental change in Scottish service delivery is expected by many including the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee (2012); McLaren (2013), and Swinney (2015). This calls for a holistic performance process that focuses on service delivery rather than measurement (Adcroft and Willis 2005; Scott 2007; Seddon 2008; Burchett 2010). Malone (the chief executive of Perth and Kinross Council, at the Public Sector Excellence in Scotland conference 2015) reveals a model for local government using performance data for improvement in local services. See Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Service delivery steps and using performance for improvements**



**Source: Malone (2015)**

The figure highlights the importance of involving the community within the performance and improvement process. Malone (2015) argues that to best serve a neighbourhood local services need to be joined up to achieve the outcomes the neighbourhood planned together.

#### **4.7.2 Other aspects of quality management**

The literature notes that deprived areas tend to have poorer quality services than more affluent areas (Duffy 2000; Mwita 2000; Hastings *et al.* 2005). Managing the quality of services in deprived areas seems to be more difficult for managers. Less resources and the scale of problems are some of the reasons for service management in deprived neighbourhoods falling behind other areas' (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005; Christie 2011). Improving service quality and so closing the gap between affluent and less affluent areas requires longer term funding. Programmes require time in order to deliver sustainable outcomes. Despite Christie (2011) recommending such practices which prompted the government's response, emphasising the importance of the four pillars (performance, prevention, people, partnership) (see Appendix Three, p.299), significant changes have arguably still to be felt at local service management level.

#### **4.7.3 Priorities for quality management in Forth Ward**

Christie (2011) set out various essentials in order to provide beneficial public services. While Christie's (2011) findings have broad applicability to the Scottish public sector, they also have real potential in improving areas that have long standing deprivations and inequalities. As parts of Forth Ward are like that his conclusions are highlighted in Table 4.2 which further analyses these by linking them and their meaning to Forth Ward. This is done on the basis of the local settings (outlined in Chapter Two) and the issues raised by the literature (in Chapter Three and Four). These points will be tested in the primary research that will explore whether what Christie saw as required priorities for public service management are being followed through in the ward.



**Table 4.2: Priorities for public service management and possible implications for the ward**

<b>Required priorities of the public service management (Christie 2011):</b>	<b>Possible implications for the ward:</b>
Detect and study the fundamental roots of “inter-generational deprivation and low aspiration” (Christie 2011, p.ix).	Forth Ward has numerous examples with as many as three to four generations of unemployed families (NESHG 2011). Breaking this chain could be one of the priorities for the area to prosper.
Putting preventative measures first to reduce needs and thus tackle inequalities.	Providing more funds and longer timeframes to services that deal with the severities of the area so as to allow sustainable changes to happen (Weiss 1995; Christie 2011; Ledwith 2011; Neil 2011).
To understand the needs of communities, the public domain has to work with them closely.	Establishing clear and open channels for dialogue between residents and service providers (Forth NP 2011, 2012, 2015).
To grow resources, public services need to make use of the private and voluntary sectors.	Recognising that private and third sector involvements could complicate performance practices (e.g. monitoring) for managers (Scott 2007).
Delivering combined services that achieve outcomes.	Encouraging joined up work between local service organisations (Forth NP 2015). Scrutinising existing partnership work’s effectiveness, economy and efficiency.
Services should not be provided by a ‘top-down’ administration. Services must serve those who need them.	Directly involving local managers and residents in relation to local service provision (these are common aims of CCs and NP) (Scottish Government 2012a; Community Councils 2015).
Accountability of public services to users.	Communicating to residents clearly and more openly the work and results achieved by their local services (Hastings <i>et al.</i> 2005; Goldberg 2012).
Clear strategic planning for the future.	Involving ward managers’ knowledge when planning the future (Scott 2007).

After the careful analysis of public management principles (see Chapter Three) and performance measurement (in this chapter), their significance can be summarised in the following table, Table 4.3. It outlines the changes over time in public management (TPA, NPM, NPG) and their impact on service performance, processes and ultimately quality. These changes are broken down to and made applicable to Scotland and also to ward level to draw out what they potentially mean for this research. During the primary research their significance will be tested.

**Table 4.3: The development of public management and its implications for Scotland and ward level service provision**

	<b>Performance Measurement</b>	<b>Service Process</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>
<b>TPA</b>	Was not present within the public administration as such	Hierarchy, following central government set rules  Input and process focused  Lack of: communication, clear decision-making	TPA follows the set rules and laws thus the work of bureaucracy is made predictable  No particular focus on the provided quality  No choice for users
<b>NPM</b>	A key doctrine of NPM  Performance measurement's aim is to improve quality by monitoring, collecting and evaluating processes	Decentralisation, space for organisational freedom for decision-making  Output and outcome focused  Partnership work, collaboration, incentives	Some of the key aspects of NPM are economic, efficient, effective, and high quality public service provision  Focus on customer rights, and more choice for users
<b>NPG</b>	Accountability focused	Applies social sciences besides	Aims to run organisations as economically as

	<p>Output based: reaching out to society and the private sector and involving them in policymaking and implementation</p> <p>Shares best practice</p>	<p>economics</p> <p>Emphasises relationships amongst organisations and all three sectors to achieve better results</p> <p>Advocates information campaigns to change the behaviour of people</p>	<p>possible while upholding great quality and value for money</p> <p>Promotes equality and sustainability</p>
<b>Implications for Scotland</b>	<p>Difficulty in measuring all aspects of a service</p> <p>Assists more professional service provision</p> <p>Provides clarity of aims and means</p> <p>Joined up services, better communication and collaboration between services</p>	<p>Accountability rests on the councils to meet agreements set out with Scottish Government</p>	<p>Involves both private and third sectors within public service delivery for providing the best quality</p>
<b>Implications for ward</b>	<p>Many aspects of local services are difficult to quantify and results often take longer to show</p> <p>Recording and showcasing performance data can be time-consuming for managers filling out paperwork</p> <p>Different funders expect measurement to be carried out differently</p>	<p>Managers are accountable from both the council and the customer side. This puts huge pressure on them</p>	<p>Devolution at ward level can lead to differences in public service delivery and quality causing inequality</p>

## 4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the roles that managers undertake when measuring performance. The importance of performance and the difficulties it entails in service areas that are more complex and thus less easily measurable have also been discussed (Talbot 2007; Seddon 2008; Dicker 2010). The literature noted some of the benefits of targets and indicators when correctly set and well understood. The problems surrounding targets and indicators in public services have also been raised. These are for example reading too much into them, their focus on output, and their mainly quantitative and top-down nature meaning they are often unable to reveal the real picture of a service (Ammons 2010; Zakaria *et al.* 2011). As local managers are often not involved in setting them the risk is that they are set without an understanding of the specific locality or context the service operates in. In subjective services like community education there are also other factors that will have an impact on service performance that targets, measures and indicators cannot reveal or do not consider (Propper and Wilson 2003; Adcroft and Willis 2005; Dicker 2010). That is why the manager's knowledge and involvement is vital.

Performance measurement aims to fulfil and thus improve the three Es in service provision (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) though there is often confusion about the different characteristics of each. The performance focus in the sector has put extra pressure on managers. They are accountable for their services to both funders and service users which will have complicated their work, especially when each has different expectations (Le Grand 2004; Scott 2007; Lipsky 2010). The increased emphasis on citizen involvement in service delivery, increased paperwork and justification of results, coupled with long-term budget cuts to services make the work of managers seem more problematic in providing quality (Nabatchi 2010; Christie 2011; Matthews 2012). Having little influence on future planning and little available time for evaluating their services causes not only staff demotivation but a risk to the prosperity of the service. The severity of these problems is well documented and causes unease within the sector (Scott 2010; Scottish Government 2010; CEC 2010a; Christie 2011; Cairney 2011; Butler 2012; Goldberg 2012;

McLaren 2013; Burton 2013; Diamond and Liddle 2013). Whether these performance related issues present themselves in the ward and how managers and stakeholders feel about performance in their local services will be central elements of the data collection.

The following chapter sets out the philosophy of the research methodology and its suitability. It addresses the possible methodological approaches before deciding which method is most fitting for this particular research.

## **Chapter Five – Methodology I**

## **Chapter Five – Methodology I**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the philosophy behind the methodology of the research and explains its suitability. It first discusses the research paradigm before going on to explore research methodology. Then it presents the three common methodological approaches that any research can select from, analyses their suitability and sets out the methodological choice made for this particular research.

### **5.2 Research philosophy**

Research philosophy is concerned with the shared assumptions amongst scientists on how to address and comprehend a matter (Crotty 1998). A research paradigm/philosophy that a researcher chooses influences the selection of research methods and overall the results of a research. Researchers are urged to exercise care when deciding what will be the appropriate research philosophy for their research (Babbie 2007; Clayton 2010; Quimby 2012). Different social research enquiries require different approaches.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2007) the application of social science research philosophies provides an insight into real life and thus reveals real life concerns. In reviewing the literature (outlined in Chapters Three and Four) the researcher noted the important, yet problematic, nature of performance measurement within the public domain. The review also highlighted a gap in general ward-level research. This gap, combined with the challenges of public sector performance measurement, led to a number of emerging research questions (see Appendix Six, p.305). The importance of community education was also noted as a way to improve people's lives and so to better especially poorer neighbourhoods (Duffy 2000; Ledwith 2011). The focus for

this research would provide an insight into real life and real life concerns would be revealed. This shaped its direction. If performance measurement within the context of ward level service provision was to be explored and understood, the perceptions and understandings of the different types of stakeholders within the ward had to be discovered.

### **5.2.1 Ontology**

There are two distinct ways of viewing the research philosophy: ontology and epistemology (outlined in section 5.2.2). Ontology is the philosophy of world view, existence and reality, the study of being (Durant-Law 2005). As ontology questions what reality is, it provides the base for outlining the research's philosophy (Crotty 1998). Ontology is commonly defined as "the theory of social entities and is concerned with what there exists to be investigated" (Walliman 2006, p.15; and also Lapan *et al.* 2012). It assesses whether these social entities ought to be perceived as objective or subjective. Consequently this refers to the two contrasting ontological beliefs: objectivism and subjectivism/constructivism (Warr 2004).

Objectivism perceives the world as an impartial, actual reality, uninfluenced by social interactions (Walliman 2006; Bryman and Bell 2007). In other words social phenomena and the meanings of those exist independently from the social entities (Bryman and Bell 2011). Therefore it trusts that there is a single reality which cannot be influenced by the observer (Bryman and Bell 2003). Constructivism however holds that people give meaning to the world by their contact and experience with it. In a constructivist approach people's own accounts provide contextual knowledge for the researcher that helps the understanding of people's behaviour, views and principles (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Mason 2005; Robson 2011). Knowledge is communal, thus knowing and understanding can come from anyone in society as individuals personally interpret reality for themselves (Bryman and Bell 2011).



Ponterotto (2005) agrees with Schwandt (1997) that constructivism accepts multiple but equally valid realities. It considers social interactions as subjective and constantly changing thus indefinite. In order to further the aim of this research, the research questions focus on how people themselves frame structures of reality and their lived experience (Labuschagne 2003). This research views the interactions at ward level as constructive. Ontologically therefore this research is of the constructivist paradigm.

### **5.2.2 Epistemology**

Ontology also shapes epistemology. Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge and reason (Winch 1999; Durant-Law 2005). Epistemology is concerned with finding the answer to how people know something and what they label as acceptable knowledge (Lapan *et al.* 2012; Gringeri *et al.* 2013). Grbich (2004, p.129) explains: “epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge related to how we know what we know and what can be known about our world. Its purpose is to identify what can be counted as valid knowledge”. There are several viewpoints within epistemology. Positivism and interpretivism are at the two ends of its spectrum (Walliman 2006; Bryman and Bell 2011).

In positivism, the world and reality can be objectively studied. A positivist believes that there is only one answer and thus objective measurement is possible (Raddon 2010). Positivism often uses logic, statistics and mathematics, natural sciences, to verify its findings. Researching social sciences differs from researching natural sciences due to the former’s subjects (Bryman and Bell 2011). An interpretivist considers that there are different thoughts and opinions amongst people on the same matter (Grbich 2004; Raddon 2010; Anderson 2013). Interpretivism proposes that each individual creates his/her understanding. This leads to multiple interpretations. Interpretivism is thus the realisation that subjective meanings play vital roles in social actions (Walliman 2006; Flowers 2009).

People's interpretations will influence their behaviour (Saunders *et al.* 2012). In order to understand them a researcher needs to study people from close proximity (Creswell 2003). The social researcher has to understand the subjective meaning of the occurring social action (Bryman and Bell 2007). This is further described by Guba and Lincoln (in Bailey 2007, p.53): "the social world is not an entity in and of itself but is local, temporally and historically situated, fluid, context-specific, and shaped in conjunction with the researcher".

Interpretivism is centred on the notion that "all knowledge is relative to the knower" (Flowers 2009, p.4). Within interpretive research other people's understanding is what leads the research forward to build knowledge (Raddon 2010). Such research enquires into the things people do and how, what purposes activities serve, and what they mean to the participants (Bailey 2007). Empiricism considers that knowledge is gained from sensory, physical experience (Walliman 2006). This research is supported by empiricism. As the participants for the research live and/or work in the ward this means that they in person experience the locality.

In line with the research aim to investigate performance measurement of community education services at ward level, understanding the ward and its people are important components of the research. This understanding will be essential particularly for discovering the perceptions of the key stakeholders that objective three sets out in Chapter One. The personal and thus subjective understanding that each local stakeholder has developed on the matter will lead the research. Therefore this research epistemologically is interpretive.

### **5.2.3 Axiology**

While both ontology and epistemology are concerned with what reality and knowledge are, and how one comes to know them, axiology is the philosophy which is concerned with the role of values and ethics (Saunders *et al.* 2012). Anyone conducting research will influence it due to their personal values (Durant-Law 2005;

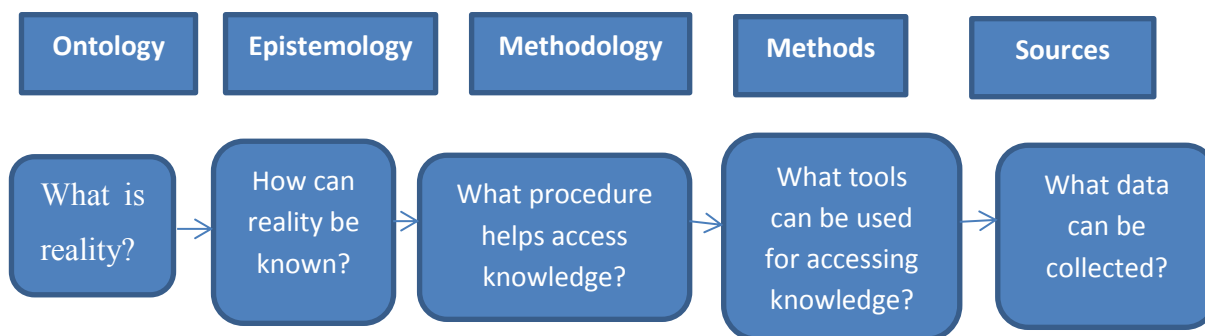
Ponterotto 2005; Saunders *et al.* 2007, 2012; Flowers 2009). As one's values lead to one's actions the decisions made by the researcher have to be clarified to the reader so that the axiological skills and choices of the researcher are made apparent (Ponterotto 2005; Flowers 2009).

Axiology aims to shed light on whether the researcher conducting research predicts the world or simply seeks to make sense of it (Lee and Lings 2008). Studying Forth Ward, this research is to make sense of the performance of services provided within it thus it aims to report on the findings as they are uncovered. Purely focusing on reporting the findings will ensure credibility and authenticity. This research is subjective not only because the stakeholder's own values will have an impact on it but also because the researcher will be present during the data collection process (Saunders *et al.* 2012). In order to reduce the influence of the researcher's own values on the research, in-depth investigations are advised to understand the subjects of the research (Creswell 2003; Lee and Lings 2008). Furthermore the data collection will only select sources who all have personal connection to the ward, to strengthen further the credibility and validity of the findings while minimising the researcher's own impacts.

### **5.3 Methodological approach**

The research methodology assists with solving the research problem (Gillham 2000; Kothari 2009; Blaxter 2010). Methodology is the strategy that connects the methods (techniques) selected to the outcomes of the research (Raddon 2010). It determines a suitable data collection process reflecting the study's ontological and epistemological perspective in order for the research to find out what has not yet been discovered (Bryman and Bell 2007; Babbie 2007; Robson 2011). Figure 5.1 illustrates the key terms.

**Figure 5.1: A graphical explanation of the key terms:**



**Source: Crotty (1998)**

There are two main methodological approaches in research: quantitative and qualitative. A third approach, mixed methods, over time has gained momentum which is when quantitative and qualitative methods are both applied (Creswell 2003). See Table 5.1 for the application of paradigms within the quantitative and qualitative contexts.

**Table 5.1: Paradigms in research contexts**

<b>View/ Supposition</b>		<b>Ontology</b>	<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Axiology</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
<b>Research Paradigm</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Nature of Reality</b>	<b>Relationship of Researcher</b>	<b>Role Values of</b>	<b>Research Process</b>
<b>Quantitative</b>	To explain and predict	Objective	Researcher is independent from what is being researched	Value free unbiased Values are outside the scientific inquiry	Deductive Cause and effect Context free

<b>Qualitative</b>	To understand and interpret To critique and identify potential	Reality is subjective and multiple	Researcher interacts with that being researched	Biased Values vary from person to person thus need to be understood.	Inductive Evolving design Context bound
<b>Mixed methods</b>	Finding answers by taking multiple approaches	The study has objective and subjective elements	The researcher is independent and also interactive during the different parts of the research	Research biases to be eliminated by the use of different methods	Collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative forms of data in a single study

**Source: Adapted from Creswell (2003)**

### 5.3.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research originates from objectivism and positivism. Quantitative research methodology has been predominantly applied in studies in natural sciences such as mathematics and physics in order to prove or disprove a hypothesis (Labuschagne 2003; Creswell 2003). It often involves the use of experiments. Quantitative methods have been applied also in social sciences on the basis that social phenomena exist independently from social actors and can be studied objectively (Crotty 1998; Bryman and Bell 2011; Anderson 2013). Quantitative research focuses on measurability, statistics and objectiveness (Punch 2005; Saunders *et al.* 2012).

Quantitative research methods include surveys. These are easy to conduct and require little time on the part of the researcher to send out and to analyse results (Labuschagne 2003; Neuman 2004). They can involve a large number of subjects which can lead to a wider study. A survey provides objective and accurate results often in the form of hard numbers and figures. The results are provable since the researcher's personal bias is avoided, so the research lends itself to replicability (Babbie 2007).

Quantitative research however has disadvantages. While it can test a hypothesis, it can miss underlying background details (Creswell 2003). A survey is not flexible; it cannot be clarified or adjusted (Neuman 2004; Babbie 2007). Survey questions if set in a simplistic manner could reflect the researcher's view rather than the subjects'. Lack of understanding of the questions could also be a problem as often there are no personnel present to clarify matters. There may be a low return rate if participants are not targeted face to face (Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Results reveal a limited picture on the subject. Quantitative research is often found to fail to discover motives and behaviours.

### **5.3.2 Qualitative research**

Qualitative research originates ontologically from constructivism, realising the importance of direct experience (Saunders *et al.* 2012). Qualitative research follows the constructivist model. It assumes that facts and reality are constructed socially, in context, and thus subjective (Creswell 2003; Anderson 2013). Qualitative research is used when the goal is to investigate underlying concepts, meanings, behaviours and accomplishments. These cannot be measured by numbers or for instance by intensity, frequency and quantity (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Phillimore and Goodson 2004). Qualitative research methods therefore are vital for sciences that study human behaviour (Kothari 2009).

A qualitative approach can lead to hypothesis-generating research (inductive) unlike a quantitative method that leads to hypothesis-testing research (deductive) (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003; Blaxter 2010; Lipscomb 2012; Holloway 2013). This methodological approach allows for flexibility in the data collection process. For example participants can respond at their own speed, and in their own tone, and be responded to in like manner: it allows for clarifications. Such a method however involves fewer participants than quantitative research would, since data collection is time-consuming (Silverman 2009; Robson 2011). Since qualitative research is all about the individual and understanding his/her views, qualitative research produces

masses of rich data. The researcher will be immersed in the participants' experiences, which further strengthens the likelihood of understanding their perceptions correctly (Anderson 2013). The findings of such a data collection can support a change to occur or stimulate a response to local needs.

The general weaknesses of qualitative research often stem from its strengths (Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Patton 2002; Packer 2011; Anderson 2013). In qualitative research a strength is the hands-on nature of the researcher as the instrument, unlike in quantitative research with for example surveys as the instrument (Warr 2004; Kane and Brun 2005). However since the researcher is involved in the data collection process, her influence needs to be eliminated so far as possible. Moreover, it can be a challenge for the researcher to remain consistent with all participants throughout the data collection (Norris 1997). Hence the research can shift focus if the researcher is not attentive or does not have enough experience to safeguard the process and draw conclusions on the sole basis of the data. In addition, while the large amount of data might help understanding, data analysis can be problematic due to its richness and large quantity (Gilbert 2002; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Replicability of such research is also challenging (Norris 1997).

### **5.3.3 Mixed methods research**

Mixed methods research means the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative methods in one research (Creswell 2003). Qualitative field methods like interviews and observations are combined with traditional quantitative methods like surveys (Neuman 2004), to remove the limitations of relying on a single method. Adding another method of data collection was found to help validate the findings from different perspectives. When applying suitable methods the combination can unearth even more data and so the results can gather possibly even more knowledge. However matching one research method's findings with another's and making sense of them can pose a challenge (Saunders *et al.* 2012). Applying mixed methods and analysing the collected data is also time-consuming and resource intensive. It can be

complex and so requires the researcher to be knowledgeable in both quantitative and qualitative fields. While it can be an attractive research strategy for researchers, they are urged to choose it with care.

Table 5.2 lists the three research methods and what they entail.

**Table 5.2: Alternative strategies of inquiry**

<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Mixed Methods</b>
Experimental designs	Grounded theory	Sequential
Non-experimental designs, such as surveys	Narratives	Concurrent
	Phenomenologies	
	Ethnographies	
	Case studies	

**Source: adapted from Creswell 2003**

#### **5.4 The researcher's choice: an interpretivist approach using qualitative methodology**

The choice for this research is to take an interpretivist approach and use qualitative methodology. This is in line with the ontological, epistemological and axiological stances outlined earlier in this chapter. The research aim, to look into performance measurement of community education services within Forth Ward, is a concept that has received very little research before and thus needs understanding. In such a case of broadening knowledge on a specific topic, qualitative research is advised (Creswell 2003; Lee and Lings 2008; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). As the background values of stakeholders/participants will be of significant influence on their views and behaviour, their lived experiences would be best captured by qualitative means (Bryman and Bell 2011; Saunders *et al.* 2012). This is in line with the interpretivist



belief that reality is interpreted by the research subject and this needs understanding (Crotty 1998).

Qualitative research methods assist with attaining 'depth' instead of 'breadth' (Blaxter 2010, p.65). This is desirable for revealing the ward's characteristics. The aim of the selected qualitative method is to better understand performance measurement of community education services. It can be achieved via the research participants. The research gathering will take place in their natural setting, meaning that the researcher does not manipulate the researched phenomenon (Skinner *et al.* 2000; Gillham 2000; Golafshani 2003; Ponterotto 2005).

A qualitative approach allows for understanding the life experiences in greater detail of those who typically do not often get involved in researches. These could be for instance residents in the deprived areas. Qualitative data can discover the routine and everyday life (Mason 2005; Silverman 2009) hence allowing for an understanding of the services provided within the ward. Asking questions that encourage reflection and insight rather than measure and assess become key channels to such understanding (Lapan *et al.* 2012).

As community education services are subjective to the user it is vital for the research to capture individual views in-depth (Edwards *et al.* 1993; Ward 2008; Popkin *et al.* 2009). In a way community education as a subject is in line with the ontological and ethnographical constructivist and interpretivist paradigms, which trust that people add meaning to their world on the basis of their own experiences (Labuschagne 2003; Walliman 2006). Exploring is not to be undertaken in a statistical manner (i.e. by quantitative method) that neither reports on the underlying issues nor discovers causal links (Punch 2005; Babbie 2007) but by revealing the communal view based on each individual's opinions (Gilbert 2002; Bryman and Bell 2011).

### 5.4.1 Qualitative research strategies

The various qualitative strategies that a researcher can opt to use are summarised in the following table. These are grounded theory, narrative research, phenomenological research, ethnography, and case study.

**Table 5.3: Qualitative research strategies**

Qualitative strategy	What it entails
Grounded theory	Researcher builds the theory on the basis of participants' views. Constant comparison of data against the categories established. Sampling different groups to ensure validity.
Narrative research	Researcher studies the lives of people and asks some of those being studied to share their stories. This creates the narrative which will be combined with the others being studied.
Phenomenological research	Researcher thoroughly studies a small number of people over a longer term in order to understand their viewpoints.
Ethnography	Researcher studies a group in a natural setting over a longer period.  Observation is the main data collection method. Studies the lived reality.
Case study	Researcher explores in-depth a matter over a longer period of time. It provides detailed information from a variety of sources.

**Source: Creswell 2003**

The process of deciding the most fitting research strategy was undertaken on the basis of the research aim of this study. Grounded theory was not chosen as this

research was not about to build a new theory and find practices using that theory, which grounded theory generally does (Goulding 2002; Gilbert 2002; Seale 2004). This research on the contrary was to enquire into performance measurement in the locality, using the questions generated on the basis of the literature review. Narrative research was also considered not suitable for this research as people did not need to share their life stories and their selected spoken words were not that significant for this study (Creswell 2003). This study had a broader aim that required the understanding of the ward rather than understanding only a few specific residents in it. Similarly, phenomenological research was not chosen. It focuses on studying a smaller group of people in greater detail to build theory (Lester 1999). It studies the structures of meaning and focuses on the lived experiences of people in relation to the common phenomenon that they all experience (Patton 2002). This study needed a wider population with multiple stakeholder groups in order to fulfil the research aim.

As mentioned in 5.2.2, empiricism is relevant for this research. Empirical research can be undertaken in the forms of ethnography or case studies (Schwandt 1997). Whilst ethnography primarily observes subjects, in case study research individual interaction with the participants is facilitated (Aguiler 1981; Gillham 2000; Swanborn 2010). In this research, participant observation as part of an ethnographic approach might have become problematic in gaining deeper knowledge about some of the communities within the ward. In the Trinity area for instance there are not as many community education services therefore observation would have been more difficult. Moreover the existing services are often received individually (e.g. by attendance at the library bus) therefore further insight might not have been gained solely on the basis of observation but more likely by the researcher's interaction with locals. As Dunne *et al.* (2005) note observation is actually to be there in person and participate to a degree as well as to ask, see and listen. Undertaking a thorough observation in different outlets providing community education services would have been time-consuming (Aguiler 1981). Besides, observation only focuses on a single participant or a few, over a longer period of time. This would potentially delay the research plan on data collection to gain a thorough understanding on the different stakeholders of the ward. This method could have produced extensive information

(Creswell 2003; Saunders *et al.* 2012) which could have increased the timescale for both the collection and analysis of data.

After careful consideration of all possible strategies stated above and linking them back to the research aim, case study research seemed the most appropriate.

#### **5.4.2 The chosen case study research**

Case studies are commonly used in social research as they explore, explain and comprehend the studied concept in its natural background. They enable deeper knowledge to be gathered of an area and its real life (Rowley 2002; Woodside 2010; Lapan *et al.* 2012). This prospect of reaching out to more locals to understand their stance as a community seemed very suitable. The ability to enquire in-depth into locals' lived experiences in relation to community education services was an important feature for this research.

Case studies are a favoured method for revealing the answers to 'how' and 'why' types of questions in non-controlled, natural settings that form the currently occurring real life of a locality at micro-level (Gillham 2000; Rowley 2002; Yin 2009; Swanborn 2010). Rowley (2002) notes that case studies are subjective and for this reason they often cause arguments over their worth, but she also acknowledges the value of case studies as often no other methods could reveal the findings gathered.

A case study focuses on one or just a few aspects in-depth to gain knowledge (Swanborn 2010). The participants' own perception on the same subject can be thoroughly compared to other participants to determine whether all people have the same perception, in other words whether people agree with one another (Rowley 2002). Therefore, many sources of information are used as data for the study which all aim to provide a greater understanding of performance measurement of the area's community education services. Case studies enable a thorough understanding of a subject (Silverman 2009).

A case study is an effective method for researching the present, when familiarising with social progressions or when a greater awareness of different stakeholders and their way of living life is sought after (Silverman 2009; Swanborn 2010; Saunders *et al.* 2012). Such characteristics for this research allow for an in-depth insight into the area and the lives of its residents. A case study hence assists with realising the world from the participants' point of view so that the research enables others to see what and how the people at the heart of the research see (Yin 2009; Swanborn 2010).

Undertaking a case study successfully is not always easy due to the hard work it involves (Yin 2009). Case study into a community can be challenging as defining a community is often problematic (Quimby 2012). Quimby (2012) notes the following practices that can help with the description of communities: studying the history of the given community; map boundaries; reviewing census data. The typical case study data sources are varied and can cover such evidence as documents on the area and interviews with locals (Robson 2002; Rowley 2002; Silverman 2009; Yin 2009). Understanding the locality can be done by studying any related documents on the issue (e.g. minutes and agendas, meetings, newspapers, etc.).

Social science research can involve more than one type of data collection method (Blaxter 2010). Case study as a research strategy is commonly associated with conducting interviews (Bryman 1998). Interviews can be either done on the basis of interviewing one person at a time or interviewing a group of people at once which is called a focus group (Frey and Fontana 1993; Gilbert 2002). A focus group can critically access community views while also providing a better understanding on the background issues (Waterton and Wynne 1999). Conducting a focus group has therefore numerous benefits for a research. It generates rich data, focuses on what is important to participants (in this case for local people) (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999). It is time effective as many can be reached out to and involved at one particular time (Steward and Shamdasani 1990). It is viewed as providing ease and comfort for participants with a relaxing environment and open discussion of a topic (Frey and Fontana 1993). Participants usually feel able to share their views or find it easy to make known their disagreement with what is being said (Barbour and Kitzinger 1999; Gilbert 2002). However because of the multiple participants, analysis of a

focus group can be problematic (Frankland and Bloor 1999). For this research, based on the many positive attributes, focus groups appeared to be a good method for understanding the local residents. In addition, individual face to face interviews would be useful for understanding local managers and the policy-making community.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the philosophy behind the research. As the philosophy influences the selection of the research method, consideration of the philosophy ensures that the method is consistent with what the researcher seeks to find out (Creswell 2003; Bryman and Bell 2011; Saunders *et al.* 2012). The subjectivity surrounding the lived experience in the ward and the performance of its community education services has called for a method that supports the constructivist and interpretivist paradigms. Local people personally interpret reality for themselves through their own experiences which consist of perception and action (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Mason 2005). Therefore understanding them requires a method that best reflects this subjectivity.

After the exploration of the three methodological approaches (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods), in line with the research aim a qualitative research method was sought. The research had natural elements of a case study since the ward's demographic and geographic profile and a variety of documents on the ward had already outlined the whole area as one (Quimby 2012). In accordance with the aim and given the characteristics of case study research, it was considered that Forth Ward as a unique entity would be best understood through a case study. This research strategy will uncover the individual views within the ward, yet collectively lead to an understanding of the operation and performance measurement of its community education services. For data collection focus groups were decided upon to hear from local residents whilst interviews would be used with local managers and policy-makers.

The next chapter will provide details on how the selected methodology was carried out.

## **Chapter Six – Methodology II**



## **Chapter Six – Methodology II**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the chosen case study research and how it was carried out within Forth Ward. The position of the researcher for the research is also discussed from an axiological viewpoint. Details are given on the sampling methods as well as the data collection processes and their suitability. The way in which data analysis was undertaken is explained in depth. The chapter then discusses the reliability, validity, generalisability and replicability of the research and considers bias. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations and the limitations of the research.

### **6.2 Case study in practice**

In a case study research focusing on a community or locality, enquiries from elderly people, locals and community representatives and local meetings can all be of help to gather knowledge (Gillham 2000; Quimby 2012). In support of painting a comprehensive picture of Forth Ward, and so as to increase the reliability and validity of the research and its findings, the researcher attended some local events. These were local community council meetings and tenant association meetings. The events generally received very little engagement from local residents as the number of attendees was exceptionally low. However these occasions helped her gain better understanding of life within the ward.

At the beginning of the research (in late 2011 and early 2012) during the literature review phase, local councillors and a local officer of The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) were contacted for general information on the ward. This was to help the researcher not to miss any background information she needed to know before interviews. The provided information was not only useful but also guided the

researcher towards, and reassured her about, the decision to choose qualitative research (LeGates 2005).

### **6.2.1 The insider researcher: axiology in action**

The role of the researcher is crucial as the collector and analyser of the data (Silverman 2009; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). A researcher can either be an insider or outsider researcher depending on whether they are from the population that is being studied or not (Asselin 2003; Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). In this research the researcher resides in Forth Ward that is being studied, therefore she is an insider researcher. Being an insider researcher is thought to have several advantages for a research. For instance the researcher can find her way more easily in the area. The researcher might be more dedicated to the research subject which raises its credibility (Brannick and Coghlan 2007; Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). Living within the area meant that the researcher had a general awareness of some of the issues that parts of the ward faced, awareness insofar as she has been living in one of the deprived areas of the ward, namely in Pilton, as an adult immigrant, an outsider. In this research the researcher wished to better understand the existing contrast between the ward's key areas through which came the realisation of the role of community education services.

An insider researcher position is not without negative aspects. The researcher could struggle with the feeling of being in between the population and the study (Brannick and Coghlan 2007). This could also lead to difficulties when analysing the data if simply showcasing the data became lost as the focal point of the research (Asselin 2003). Many like Aguiler (1981) and Greene (2014) warn that being an insider can make gaining access to information harder. A participant could either hold information back assuming it is well known to the researcher or on the contrary the researcher is seen too removed from the research topic thus the researcher is not trusted to be provided with particular information (Greene 2014). In this research not a single manager, local, activist, councillor or politician declined when approached to

take part. It is thought that if the researcher has experience of the research topic (e.g. community education services), that can shape the research process though there is an argument that despite being an insider the researcher might not have an insight into the processes that occur at the level that she is investigating (Mullings 1999; Asselin 2003). In such a case the researcher can be objective because the data collected is natural and not influenced by her (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). (See section 6.6.5 for further details.) The researcher of this research had no prior knowledge of public service management and its theories. Neither did she have awareness of the ward's community education services. Therefore she brought a considerable independence of mind to the subject.

Regardless of being an insider or outsider, researcher objectivity is essential for maintaining the unbiased nature of the study (Saunders *et al.* 2012). Some like Norris (1997) reject the idea that any research can be free from bias irrespective of whether the researcher is an insider or not. Breen (2007) agrees that all researchers (insiders and outsiders) are subject to complying with the same methodological principles. In order to eliminate biases any kind of researcher has to keep an open mind as if she did not know anything about the subject of the investigation when collecting data (Van Heugten 2004; Corbin Dwyer and Buckle 2009). This point was reinforced because despite the researcher used some basic everyday life services such as the GP surgery within the ward, those were not in the field of community education services. As a university student she has not even had to use the local library due to her studies allowing for institutional library membership. Therefore she was new to such a field and its delivery in the ward.

### **6.3 Research sampling**

Since the whole population of the ward could not be interviewed, a smaller part of the population was required. This is called sampling, using a sample to represent the population that the research seeks to study (Sekaran and Bougie 2009; Saunders *et al.* 2012). The selection of a sample depends on the overall aim of the research

(Denscombe 2010). Obtaining contextual, deeper knowledge was an important part of this research. Contextual knowledge of the data enables it to be used as evidence for a research (Wengraf 2002; Qu and Dumay 2011). Finding this deeper knowledge can be by means of non-probability sampling of the population (Saunders *et al.* 2012), particularly by purposive sampling. It meant that participation within the research was not available for all but for those who fulfilled a more specific criterion, possessed knowledge on the research subject (Walliman 2006; Babbie 2007).

Purposive sampling within a case study and within qualitative research is one way to ensure that groups, people and the area as a whole have familiarity with the research subject (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). This keeps the focus of the research precise and the results valid. Following this approach the people to be interviewed were carefully selected in order to include the ones who represent the area as a whole and people who manage, use or are aware (i.e. have had experience) of the characteristics of locally delivered community education services within the ward. For that reason informed participants were sought for the interviewing.

The importance of targeting public service users was that even though they might not possess scientific knowledge they knew their lived experiences and were aware of the meanings these experiences had for them hence they had a unique insight (Denscombe 2010; Dybicz 2012). There was also an age criterion that participants had to be adults, at least over the age of 18, as community education services are generally targeted at this age group. Tongco (2007) warns of the danger of choosing unfit people as part of this type of sampling. This was eliminated by the researcher when interviewing service managers and the policy-making community of the ward since those stakeholder group members were trusted sources with status. These people all had titles and were recognised within their field: the managers of key local services delivering community education services, the parliament members and local councillors.

After the initial people were purposefully selected, snowball sampling was applied to find additional potential local interviewees. It is another kind of non-probability sampling since the recommended people voluntarily participate (Blaxter *et al.* 2006; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). It asks participants to recommend other potential

participants (Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Snowball sampling builds a network that represents the shared interest of its members (Gilbert 2002). Snowball sampling can further reduce the general chance for people to participate. It is because those contacts who have been referred to will usually be approached and asked to take part in the research. However it increases the credibility of the research as key members within the field of the research are identified by other sources considered important for the study (Blaxter *et al.* 2006). The first interviewees lead to others. For instance a community education manager points out another manager within the locality whose views are judged to be of value to the research. These trusted sources then refer to other similarly high quality sources due to their title and expertise in this field. They also then identify local activists, service users and local residents to be interviewed as by their working activity they have many connections within the ward. It allowed for possibilities such as an activist directing the researcher to a fellow activist. Snowball sampling proved useful and important for the research in order to find representatives of each stakeholder group and to thoroughly understand their views (Sekaran and Bougie 2009).

#### **6.4 Research methods**

As the previous chapter (section 5.4.2) outlined, the plan was for face to face interviews with managers and politicians and for group interviews/focus groups with locals. Initially, two focus groups were set up in Pilton. Over time, more were to be set up in all three areas of the ward: Pilton, Granton, and Trinity. In the focus groups, locals of similar ages were gathered to be group interviewed in the local library and community café. They were service users of the library, community training programmes or the community art centre. Prior to the group sessions they were given information sheets to read and consent forms to sign to agree to participate (Queen Margaret University (QMU) Research Ethics, Guidelines, Procedures and Regulations 2011). The themes and questions asked from the groups can be found in

Appendix Six. The group interviews were recorded by Dictaphone and each lasted over one hour.

The group interviews did not run as hoped. One of the problems was that it seemed almost impossible to find a time that suited service users. Then, despite agreeing to a time there were a couple of absentees in both groups. This resulted in one focus group having two more members (8 people) than the other (6 people). During the group interviewing many people did not contribute as much as it was hoped. Some were more extrovert than others and tried to lead the conversation. When the interviewer intervened to ask others' opinions some still stayed very quiet. Another problem appeared during transcription, namely, the recognition of voices. Pairing voices to participants started to cause great difficulties (Frankland and Bloor 1999). As most participants were ladies recognising their tones was quite challenging. These disadvantages of focus groups are commonly outlined by many authors such as Steward and Shamdasani (1990); Frey and Fontana (1993); Krueger (1998); Morgan (1998); Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) and Gilbert (2002). Given these problems, after piloting a couple of focus groups they were discontinued on the basis that they were proving unproductive. Interviewing then became the sole research method.

#### **6.4.1 Interviewing**

In order to find out the understanding local stakeholders (residents, managers, councillors and parliament members) had of locally available community education public services in the ward, in-depth interviews were selected. Interviews can also be used for assessment and can lead to changes (Wengraf 2002). In this case it could be by better understanding the public, the management and the policy-making community as noted in Chapter Five. This further validated the selection of this method as the findings might have an importance for stakeholders in shaping the services in the area.

Once the participants, representing the policy-making community and local managers, were identified, contact with them was made by email or phone. Local residents by and large were approached in person in the community education settings (e.g. library, community centre). However if they were referred by others they were contacted by email or phone. After the potential participant of any stakeholder group decided to participate a suitable time was agreed and the face to face meeting took place. It was either in their natural location (within the elected member's office, council offices, local public spaces such as a library, community centres, community café) or an agreed location convenient to the participants and their working life (city centre public café locations were often preferred).

At the face to face meeting for the interview, interviewees were given an information sheet to read prior to the start of the interview process. A copy of it is provided in Appendix Four (p.302). As with the focus groups mentioned above, this procedure was undertaken in accordance with the Queen Margaret University (QMU) Research Ethics, Guidelines, Procedures and Regulations (2011). Interviewees had the chance to ask questions and clarify anything they had not fully understood and also to refuse to take part in the interview. No participant opted to withdraw. Having read the sheet and raised questions, they were presented with a consent form that they were asked to sign (see Appendix Five, p.304). All consent forms were collected and safely stored by the researcher. The interviews were recorded by Dictaphone; all agreed to the recording prior to starting the interviews.

There are three different types of interviews, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Table 6.1 based on the literature (Kvale 2007; Gill *et al.* 2008; Sekaran and Bougie 2009) summarises them. This analysis helped the researcher to decide on the most suitable type of interview for this research.

**Table 6.1: The different interview types**

Type of interview	What it consists of	Advantages	Disadvantages
Structured	It is likened to an orally conducted questionnaire as it has a list of questions.	Quick and easy.  Good for when clarification is sought.	No opportunity to follow up answers.  Limits participants' response.
Semi-structured	It has some key questions which reflect the areas to be enquired into.	Allows flexibility for interviewer to follow on answers.	Can be time consuming.
Unstructured	Questions are not predetermined. This allows for an everyday like conversation and flow.	Can gather data on areas with very little knowledge. Can offer a different perspective to a subject area.	Time consuming.  Difficult to manage for the interviewer. Can be confusing for the interviewee to take part in.

**Sources: Kvale 2007; Gill *et al.* 2008; Sekaran and Bougie 2009**

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research. This was to support investigating the research topic in-depth, in order to find out as much as possible about it (Waterton and Wynne 1999). Since the response of people to the topic was considered important reflecting the interpretivist approach of this research (see Chapter Five sections 5.2.2 and 5.5), it was decided to carry out the interviews face to face to take full advantage of the merits of interviews (Silverman 2009; Stake 2010; Quimby 2012). Semi-structured interviews meant that the questions were prepared in advance but those questions left space for open discussions (Silverman 2009; Packer 2011). The emerging discussions meant that the answers could not be determined beforehand and thus the researcher had to improvise at times (Wengraf 2002). This was not surprising since semi-structured interviews, as opposed to fully-structured ones, require more discipline and dedication, as well as being well-prepared (Wengraf 2002; Gilbert 2002; Qu and Dumay 2011).



An interview schedule was used by the researcher to ensure all important questions were asked. The general themes and related questions are included in Appendix Six. In this research it was often the case that one question led the interviewee to open up about another similar or related aspect which was then followed up before returning to the prepared questions. Walliman (2006) favours this: to ask many questions about the same subject from different perspectives to ensure the answers are not simplified.

There are many positives of an interview for both the interviewee and interviewer. Mack *et al.* (2005) agree that the experience for the participants and the researcher is fulfilling. Interviewees enjoy it since it gives them space to express themselves and to be listened to and valued for their views (Silverman 2009; Saunders *et al.* 2012). The interviewer can also feel empowered that unknown people listen and respect her work and her role. Moreover those interviewees often open up about their private lives. This was the experience in this research.

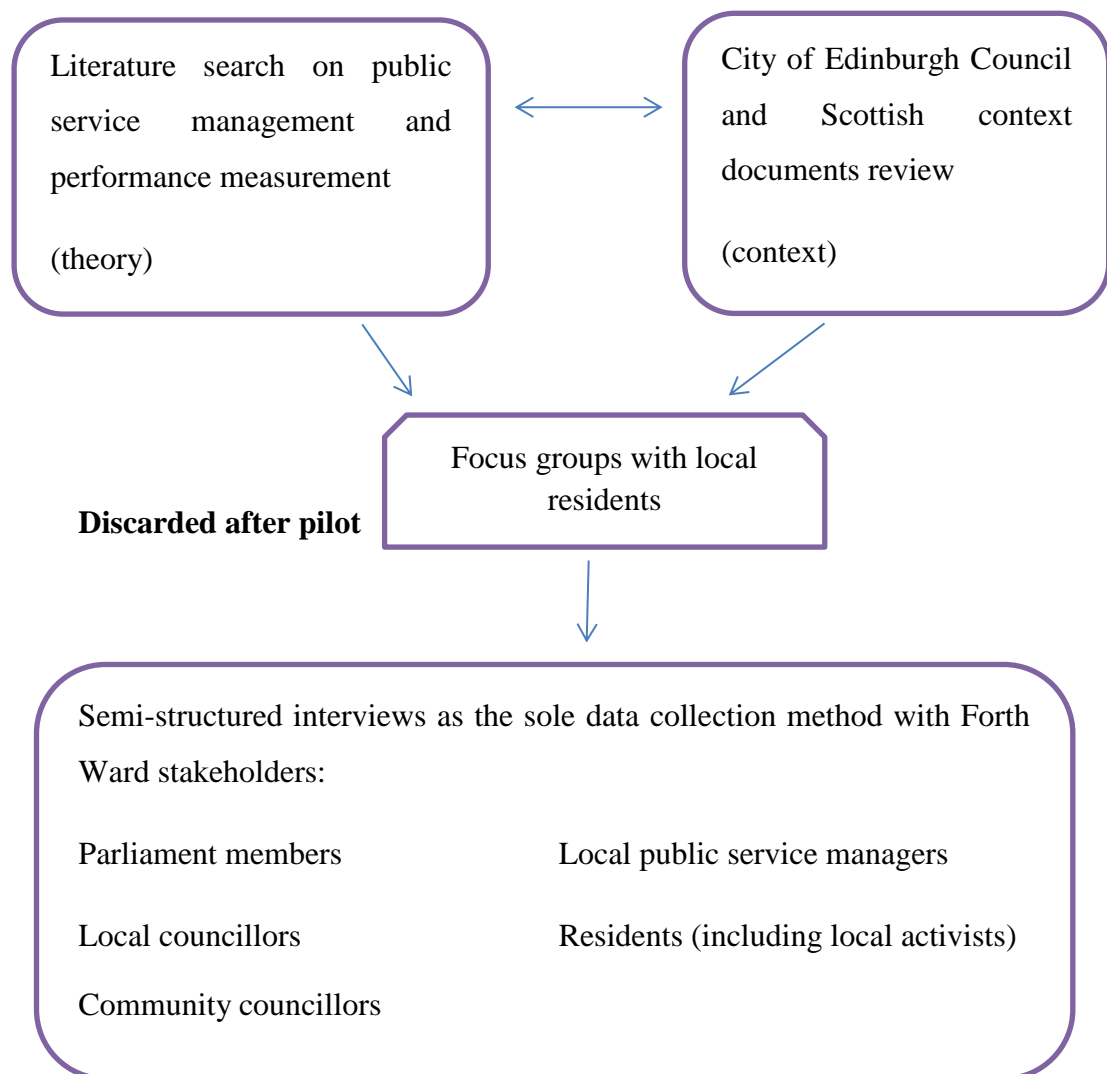
There are numerous issues with semi-structured interviews as Phillimore and Goodson (2004) explain. Some of the common issues are that interviews can be lengthy (sometimes longer than an hour) and produce a large amount of data (Gilbert 2002; Wengraf 2002). Interviewer and interviewee never leave behind their feelings, their age, their past and personal issues (Gilbert 2002; Packer 2011). This can be remedied by enquiring about the same detail in other forthcoming interviews and providing details so that the reader can understand (Durant-Law 2005). The interview results are entirely dependent on the honesty of the interviewee. The researcher must ensure that she does not inspire members to deliver specific answers and also does not lead the participants (Mack *et al.* 2005). Therefore the researcher must remain neutral (Wengraf 2002; Quimby 2012). Framing the questions objectively and focusing on open ended questions are some of the ways to reduce such biases (Silverman 2009; Sekaran and Bougie 2009; Saunders *et al.* 2012). The researcher applied these in her interview schedule (Appendix Six, p.305).

As there were many kinds of stakeholders that had to be represented across the ward and its three main areas, it was suspected that the number of interviews would be relatively high for qualitative Ph.D. research (Baker and Edwards 2012). Regardless of the total number of conducted interviews due to the qualitative nature of the

research methodology, fewer participants could be involved than if a quantitative study were chosen (Labuschagne 2003).

61 interviews were gathered between mid-July and mid-December 2013. The interviewees were built up as follows: general public and local service users in the ward, community activists, local public service managers, community councillors, local councillors, MPs and MSPs. Semi-structured interviews are built up by ‘theory-construction’ and ‘theory-verification’ (Wengraf 2002, p.4). Having numerous interviewees from the same stakeholder groups assisted with clarifying any points when the researcher felt explanation was needed about an emerging notion. The research process is outlined in Figure 6.1.

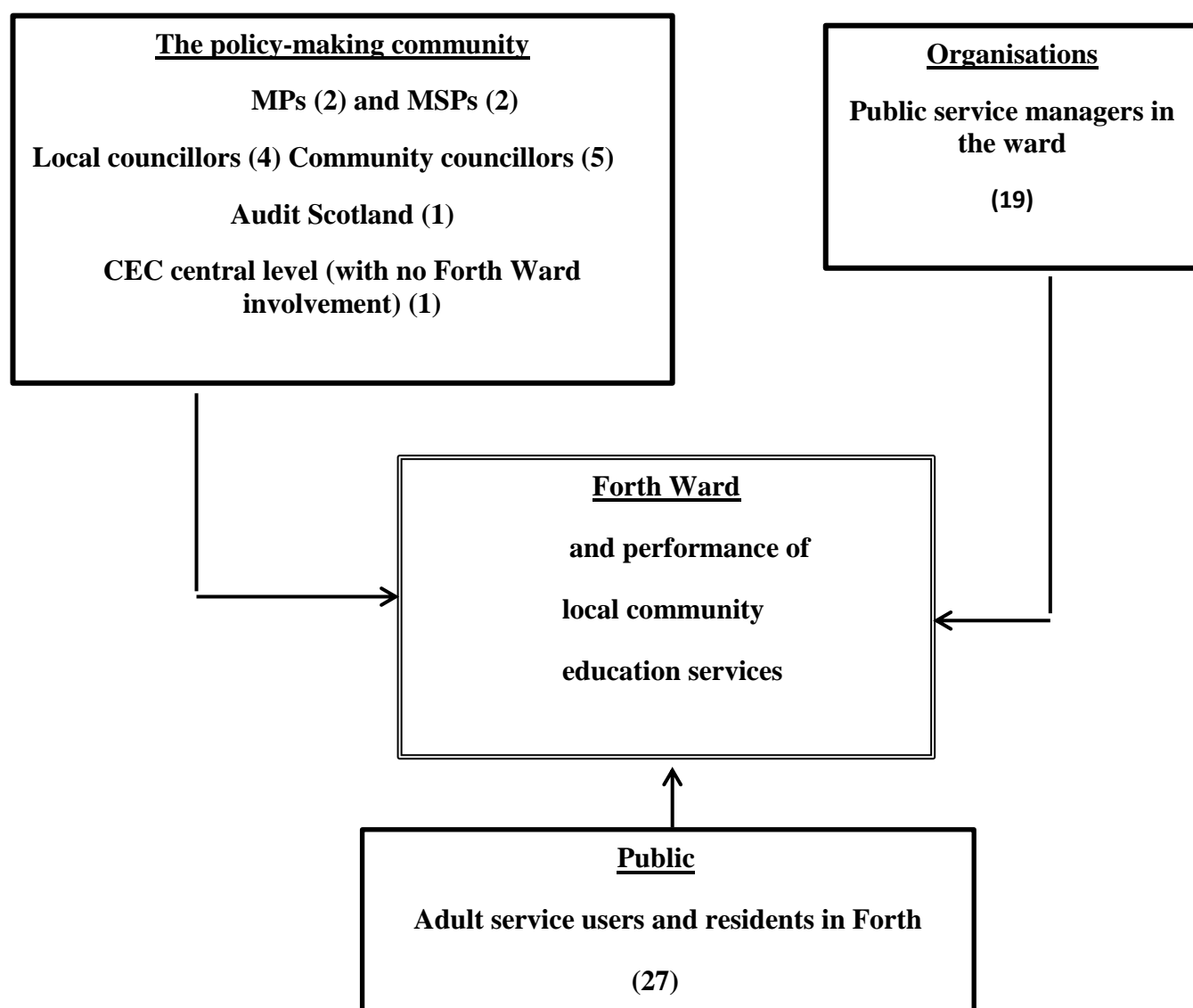
**Figure 6.1: The summary of the research process**



The interviews were scheduled to last approximately one hour although with many residents as well as politicians it often lasted closer to one and a half hours. The emphasis on open-ended questions asked in a naturalistic manner supported a free-style conversation that further led to deep discussion (Atkinson 1998; Bryman and Bell 2003; Mack *et al.* 2005; Brinkmann *et al.* 2008; Silverman 2011). By revealing subjective factors (Holliday 2002; Kothari 2009) the interviews gave plenty of information that provided a rich set of data with which the researcher could work (Stake 2010; May 2011).

Interviewing based on snowball sampling proceeded until saturation i.e. to the point where data repeats itself and new information does not emerge (Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Silverman 2009, 2011; Kumar 2011). The researcher was categorising the data as she went (see section 6.5) and therefore was able to take a view as to when this stage was reached. All information that was being provided could be categorised on the basis of the previously conducted interviews (Denzin and Lincoln 1998), and the gathered responses were similar or in line with the responses in the previously conducted interviews. This saturation point is subjective. It is up to the researcher to decide when enough information is gathered (Kumar 2011). Baker and Edwards (2012) also advise that collecting more data when saturation is reached is needless. Representing the views in the ward thoroughly was important for this research which meant the inclusion of a larger number of participants. A more detailed breakdown of interviewees is provided in Figure 6.2.

**Figure 6.2: Data collection sources**



( ) shows the number of interviews

All of the elected policy-making community of the ward were interviewed (all MPs and MSPs (other than the Lothian Regional MSPs), all local councillors). A senior manager at Audit Scotland and one from CEC were interviewed. The former interview provided the context to public service provision in Edinburgh and Scotland. The latter interview gave an insight into CEC operations and CEC relationships with the ward from a central and thus removed point of view. Many

local public service delivery managers were talked to in the field of community education in the ward. Service users/local residents from the three distinct areas of the ward also took part.

## **6.5 Data analysis**

Since data collection was by means of a qualitative method, making sense of the data and analysing it are the next steps in the research process. Considering that there were 61 interviews the analysis process needed careful consideration in order to represent the respondents' views correctly. Therefore this section explains in detail what happened with the interview data once collected. It sets out how the data was transcribed and the type of analysis which was used. Finally mention is made of the software package that helped store and access the data.

Qualitative research involves hard and tedious work due to collecting, reading and re-reading the collected material in order to spot similar themes. May (2011) emphasises that the success of the analysis is dependent on the researcher. The researcher has to focus on small details while being determined and objective. As qualitative research data comes in the forms of 'soft data' such as description, views, emotions, and interpretation, analysing these is not straight forward (Chenail 1995; Walliman 2006). Periodic analysis is advised in order to understand what was said and in which direction to take the research further (Walliman 2006). This repetitive process, going frequently back and forward on the collected data, is one of the key principles of qualitative research (Quimby 2012). Consequently, the analysis started before the data collection period was over. Once there were some conducted interviews the researcher started transcribing them and then analysed them while at the same time carrying out the further scheduled interviews. Reducing the data in qualitative research can be a challenging task (Frankland and Bloor 1999). It can get more complex the more that data is collected (Walliman 2006).

Analysing qualitative data means the non-numerical grouping of the data to enable the researcher to find shared patterns, themes and codes within all the collected materials (Labuschagne 2003; Braun and Clarke 2006; Saldana 2009; Quimby 2012). The researcher went over the Dictaphone recorded soundtracks of each individual script gained from the participants. The researcher purchased and intended to use Dragon NaturallySpeaking Version 12 voice recognition software in the hope of replacing the time-consuming task of typing up the interviews manually. Information had to be put into the software by talking to it in order for it to understand and pick up accent and tones. Despite this input from the researcher the software did not recognise the dialogue in the interviews. Therefore the researcher manually typed up the scripts one by one, each into a Microsoft Word document.

The researcher transcribed all 61 interviews. The transcribing proved to be a very slow process, taking a long time to copy the responses precisely. The time spent individually typing up interviews typically involved listening, replaying and correcting misheard words numerous times. While this was tiring and time-consuming at the time, it enabled the researcher to gain a deep familiarity with each transcript. This proved to be fruitful at the stage of analysis as the researcher could often memorise individual views of the participants.

After the typing was complete then the investigation could begin to find and group connected themes under one shared heading. This was in accordance with the principles of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was chosen for reducing and organising the data because it is a favoured and flexible way of analysing rich data (Boyatzis 1998; Burnard *et al.* 2008). A theme is viewed as information that holds importance in relation to the research question and is commonly repeated throughout people's accounts (Braun and Clarke 2006).

This research analysis was supported by the use of NVivo9 software, a computer qualitative data analysis package (Schwandt 1997; Bazeley and Richards 2000). NVivo works with qualitative, word based information rather than structured and numbered information (QSR International 2011). The NVivo software does not analyse but provides the facility for analysis (Gibbs 2002; Burnard *et al.* 2008; QSR International 2011). It assists with the research layout so that the researcher is able to

make better decisions by better and clearer connections that would not be possible manually. Once the transcribing was completed the individual Word documents for each interview were entered into the NVivo9 software.

The analysis had several stages. The first stage of analysis was becoming familiar with the data, then adding codes or labels. Labelling, or giving specific meaning to the collected data, is called coding which assists by reducing and categorising the data (Goddard 2004; Saldana 2009; Silverman 2009). It organises the data and is “the first step in conceptualisation” while also it “prevent[s] data overload” (Walliman 2006, p.133). Initial codes were created based on the secondary data collection in the form of the literature review. The primary data collection as a response to the research questions added further meaningful words and sentences and themes. Themes are a group of codes under the same label (Gilbert 2002; Robson 2011). The aim is to start with suggestions as to where a particular script could belong (Frankland and Bloor 1999).

Themes were then recognised by gathering data into/under these emerging codes. The gathered themes were then organised and at this stage the transcripts were again compared with the themes and if needed some slight modifications were made (e.g. moving a quote under another theme) in order to ensure each theme truly represented what was said within the original transcripts. Finally the interpretation stage took place when the researcher explored and compared the different themes and interpreted their meaning (Robson 2011). The findings could be made sense of and written up based on the creation of these common themes and categories. These stages of analysis have implications for the validity and reliability of the research thus the researcher has to be cautious. That is why rigorous and coherent transcribing and then coding of the themes were extremely significant (Tesch 1990; Boyatzis 1998; Braun and Clarke 2006; Sekaran and Bougie 2009; Silverman 2011).

The NVivo analysis software provided an efficient platform for analysis due to having free and tree nodes. Free nodes assist with coding by creating the initial profiling of an interviewee (Wiredu 2011). This profile, created for analysis, then lends itself and its parts to be further broken down later with more clarity about the interviewee’s responses. Facets of responses are then grouped under a tree or

hierarchy made up of nodes (tree nodes). The section of headings and subheadings takes similar parts from other interviewees' profiles and groups them together creating a pool of similar information that can be easily found and cited (Wiredu 2011). The software can undertake analytical tasks such as creating categories and grouping data below them. It was a particularly helpful tool for analysis. Themes were easily created and interviewees' responses were neatly stored under the themes. This clarified the collected information, categorised it precisely and reduced the quantity of data while avoiding cross referencing. See Appendix Seven (p.311) for a sample of NVivo interview entries, Appendix Eight (p.313) for an illustration of main headlines for themes and Appendix Nine (p.314) for the topics that emerged under the main themes.

### **6.5.1 Presentation of the findings**

There are different ways to present thesis findings. Holloway and Brown (2012) indicate that qualitative dissertation findings and discussions can be either integrated into one chapter or presented separately. The latter is achieved by providing the findings chapter first then the discussion chapter with the implications of the key themes and their links to the secondary data collection, the literature review. In this research the many transcripts led to a very large array of themes and findings. Therefore the researcher decided to present the findings chapter separately from the discussion chapter. This decision was taken in order to provide space for the findings to be presented thoroughly before implications would be drawn and comparisons made with the literature. After the long process of data collection and interpretation it felt appropriate and just to let the views of participants appear first before attempting to discuss meanings in relation to the secondary research.

Before data analysis the researcher planned that the three main areas of the ward, Pilton, Granton, and Trinity, would be analysed separately. However multiple publications, for example the Scottish NESHG (2011), SIMD (2009, 2012), and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (2014) showed that overall characteristics such as



wealth (income), employment status, health, education, and level of crime are similar in the Pilton and Granton areas as a whole. This point was further evident once the data analysis was completed as Pilton and Granton showed similar results. Therefore it was decided that for the findings and discussion chapters, information on Pilton and Granton would be presented together. This is to help with the clarity of the research and provide easier reading.

## **6.6 Qualitative research and reliability, validity, generalisability, and replicability**

The terms reliability, validity, generalisability and replicability originate from quantitative research. The literature on qualitative research notes that they take on a different meaning, and altered significance, in qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln 1985; Seale 1999; Patton 2002; Golafshani 2003; Noble and Smith 2015). Many like Chenail (1995), Seale (1999), Robson (2002), Golafshani (2003), Long (2007), Long and Johnson (2007) and Yin (2009) agree that in the case of qualitative research the key for fulfilling such terms is in the rich, precise, real and descriptive data, making good research from which anyone can learn. This section examines each of these qualities.

### **6.6.1 Reliability**

Long and Johnson (2007) define reliability as “confidence in data collection” (p.30). In other words reliability means that the results truthfully represent the population under examination (Golafshani 2003). Golafshani (2003) and Long and Johnson (2007) emphasise that while studies strive to be reliable, proving a study’s reliability is almost impossible. They argue that this is because of the complex variety of types of data collected. In qualitative research reliability is closely linked to dependability

or consistency of data throughout its collection and analysis (Seale 1999; Golafshani 2003). Terms such as consistency, credibility, transferability and applicability are central traits of reliability in qualitative studies (Guba and Lincoln 1985; Seale 1999; Golafshani 2003). This confidence in data is reliant on the work of the researcher throughout the research. What strengthens research are the qualities of the researcher, for example being vigilant, efficient, organised and rigorous when undertaking interviews. In this research the researcher aimed to demonstrate all of these qualities not only for the duration of interviews but throughout the whole period of the research. For example the background research and the breadth of literature reviewed demonstrate such research rigour, in a focused and structured manner. Likewise the analysis of the data was well organised to ensure the findings are reliable.

### **6.6.2 Validity**

Patton (2002) views reliability as a consequence of validity. Validity is the appropriateness of the application of methods, and precision so that the findings honestly represent the data (Clayton 2010; Noble and Smith 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this as trustworthiness in qualitative research. The reliability and validity of the data is believed to mostly depend on the researcher's skills when assessing the data (Labuschagne 2003; Kvale 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2009; Quimby 2012). Therefore, the following traits are categorised as vital expertise for undertaking qualitative research: "discipline, knowledge, training, practice and hard work" (Labuschagne 2003, p.101). Norris (1997) argues that validity does not necessarily guarantee a trustworthy or objective study. However the validity of a qualitative research project can be enhanced by ruling out any threats to the research during the data collection. This can be achieved by solely relying on the collected evidence, hence all explanations and assumptions made have to stem only from the evidence (Chenail 1995; Sekaran and Bougie 2009).

There are two forms of validity: internal and external (Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Internal validity is about how well a research is conducted. The researcher can and

needs to ensure that the internal validity of research is high through consistency (Golafshani 2003). The trustworthiness, and therefore the reliability and internal validity of this research, was increased by the large number of participants from all stakeholder groups of the ward. This ensured the reaching out to a wide variety of backgrounds amongst stakeholders. They were consistently being asked the same key research questions that aimed at ensuring the accuracy of the collected data (Silverman 2009; Saunders *et al.* 2012).

Qualitative research achieves ‘naturalism’ (Seale 1999 p.107), gaining naturally occurring validity since it takes place in the study subject’s natural context (Chenail 1995). It is thus through naturalism that qualitative research can take external validity into other contexts (Guba and Lincoln 1985).

In research, external validity is closely linked with generalisability (see below). However in the case of qualitative research, external validity is often associated with transferability. While generalisability is a quality which means that findings can be measured or tested or checked by applying findings from one setting to another (Schwandt 1997; Denscombe 2002, 2003; Sekaran and Bougie 2009), transferability is a procedure. Transferability is practised by the reader who examines how the research findings could link to other circumstances based on the detailed surroundings of the fieldwork descriptions. This enhances the validity and applicability of the study into other contexts (Seale 1999; Denscombe 2002; Shenton 2004). Therefore detailed information assists and increases the external validity of a research. The descriptions in the findings section of this thesis wished to ensure that the reader understood in detail what was being said in the interviews and so enable the reader to judge and apply such findings to other settings.

### **6.6.3 Generalisability**

Qualitative research focuses on the “meaning of the phenomena and the lived experience” (Labuschagne 2003, p.103) that are not easily evident processes. This is

why Wengraf (2002) and Clayton (2010) dismiss the notion that qualitative research needs to be generalisable by stating that generalisability is the main focus of quantitative research rather than qualitative. According to many like Robson (2011) generalisability is not a major concern of the qualitative research method as it is habitually argued as being neither generalisable nor replicable in other settings. Despite this, Mason (1996) argues that qualitative researchers need not only to make explanations but also to have at least a degree of generalisability for a wider significance. However Stake (2010) points out that qualitative research focuses on particularisation instead of generalisation. Description substitutes measurement and “understanding replaces generalisability” (Labuschagne 2003, p.100). With its interpretivist stance Flowers (2009) points out that such study due to its subjective nature is not generalisable.

Swanborn (2010) identifies a main shortfall of case study research as being its lack of generalisability. While earlier scholars rejected the idea that one off case studies had generalisable substance, lately this strong view has softened (Quimby 2012). Seale (1999) trusts that one case can be enough to better understand something. However studying a neighbourhood according to Quimby (2012, p.110) is more problematic:

Generalisations should be done with caution. Although certain sociological similarities may exist, each neighbourhood has its own structural circumstances, economic conditions, history, norms, values, behaviors, institutions, forms of social control, interests, expectations and needs. In fact, these may be quite varied even within a particular neighbourhood. Findings and recommendations may or may not have broad or direct policy implications for other communities. Reported research outcomes may be useful for interventions in other areas.

While there are many characteristics neighbourhoods generally can have in common (Duffy 2000; Hastings *et al.* 2005, 2012) this research is specific to Forth Ward with its unique composition. As this research set out to better understand Forth Ward it is not generalisable to other areas. However according to Quimby’s (2012) quote above, some of the results might have relevance to other areas especially wards in Scotland.

#### **6.6.4 Replicability**

Replicability is also a research concern though more applicable in quantitative research. It means the repeatability of similar results if similar research was conducted at another time (Sekaran and Bougie 2009). Replicability can be achieved in more controlled settings such as in experiments where tests would show the same results over and over again. In social research, due to the subjective nature of people as participants, the replicability lessens. Many researchers argue that in qualitative research achieving replicability is difficult thus if the research was repeated the results could be different (Bryman 1998; Gilbert 2002; Babbie 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2009). This research focuses on the ward and the measurement of the performance of the community education services there. There is a confidence that had this research been conducted later or in the future, results would be similar unless structural changes transform wards or community education services in the meantime. This confidence is due to the in-depth enquiries into the subject via the many stakeholder groups of the ward.

#### **6.7 Bias**

A common issue in qualitative research is bias. Biases can occur in research due to its subjective nature (Gilbert 2002; Neuman 2004). The interviewer and interviewee both bring their own values and prejudices to the research (Quimby 2012). Being aware of this and reducing such biases are vital for the credibility and thus reliability and validity of the research (Bryman and Bell 2003; Mack *et al.* 2005; Sekaran and Bougie 2009; Silverman 2009).

Eliminating interviewee biases can be by involving numerous participants from different backgrounds but with relevance to the research topic (Saunders *et al.* 2012). In order to support the participants' objectivity during the data collection the fact that the researcher was from the area was neither naturally revealed by the researcher nor

hidden if participants asked. In most cases participants did not question her motives or where she was from. They were satisfied with her being a university student researching the locality. However when some participants asked about it the researcher did not feel she was treated in any way differently than by the majority of the participants who did not know she lived locally.

Social desirability bias on behalf of the interviewees has also to be noted. Many scholars like Marlowe and Crowne (1961), Fisher (1993), and Lavrakas (2008) indicate the tendency that interview participants give answers in a way they see to be more socially acceptable rather than providing their honest opinion. Naturally this causes bias and does not reveal their true views. This according to Fisher (1993) is because “respondents are often unwilling or unable to report accurately on sensitive topics for ego defensive or impression management reasons” (p.303). This can be limited when questions are framed in an indirect manner, which means asking the respondent what others might feel about the same issue (Fisher 1993). Embedding this form of enquiry within the interviews aimed to eliminate this risk as much as possible. Questions were framed for instance like: “What are the most important public services for this area?” “What do people use and rely on the most here?” See Appendix Six for the interview questions). Interviewees’ responses to such types of questions seemed positive as they without difficulty provided their views which led to the collective view. As the same topics were raised with the different stakeholders, the responses appeared to clarify the common feelings as managers, activists, locals and representatives all reported similar views.

Similarly, another potential concern was that participants might criticise their own locality based on its provided services (Oliver 2010). There was a possibility that people would report on the area by being overly critical of the negatives (i.e. overstating their severity) especially in the deprived parts of the ward, perhaps hoping that via this research further attention would be given to the area leading to improvement. However as Kvale (2007) notes, such behaviour is rare amongst interview participants but their possible existence cannot be ignored. As outlined above, this issue also can be reduced by interview techniques. Asking for precise details and for collective opinions rather than individual opinion can decrease such a

problem. The wide variety and number of participants as well as their different backgrounds all serve to lessen the risk of this specific bias (Robson 2002, 2011).

The researcher also has to be aware of herself as a researcher and her relation to the topic (Norris 1997), striving for objectivity by putting aside personal feelings and views by solely relying on the presenting data. One common form of bias is interviewer bias when conducting interviews. Interviewer bias refers to distorting responses and thus influencing the findings in a way that is in line with and reflects the interviewer's own values or motives to present findings in a certain way. Therefore the interviewer's behaviour can introduce bias in the interviewee response (Saunders *et al.* 2012). In order to eliminate interviewer bias semi structured interviews were used with the same key questions being asked from every participant (Guba and Lincoln 1985; Silverman 2011). Appendix Six lists the interview questions. The questions were framed in a neutral manner rather than using leading questions that would suggest an answer (Mason 1996, 2005; Saunders *et al.* 2007; Sekaran and Bougie 2009).

The common thread emerging in the answers to the same questions was an indication as well as a reassurance that it was the interviewee's own opinion rather than the interviewer's which were uncovered. When an interviewee's answer did not appear clear they were asked to explain further. Questions were logically grouped together on a topic to make the interview process easier to follow for both interviewee and interviewer (Walliman 2006). Follow up questions in later interviews were also used, in order to clarify and understand some common aspects better, based on the interviewees' responses as opposed to the researcher's own thoughts.

Another way of remaining objective is by self-evaluation. Greene (2014) calls this reflexivity which is, for example, to talk about the collected data to others. By such a reflective process, a distance from the research can be gained (Brannick and Coghlan 2007). The researcher often discussed her data collection progress with family members and university colleagues which seemed helpful. The research was also shared with different audiences at different conferences throughout the research process. These events required the researcher to provide explanations of her findings,

research merit and reliability of her work (see Appendix Ten (p.320) for details of all the presentations).

## 6.8 Ethics

All social research needs to follow ethical considerations. “Knowledge comes from experience and the undertaking of detailed and meticulous inquiries through which we generate our understandings” (May 2011, p.164). Understanding people involves the consideration of what makes them unique (Runyan 1982 in Wengraf 2002). To do this successfully, ethics or in other words the collective research principles need to be referred to and followed by researchers (Neuman 2004). Boje (2008) sums ethics up as “doing the right things in the right way” (p.8). Social research ethical values include respecting people’s opinions, reducing harm in taking part, caring for wellbeing, and being fair (Seale 2004). The researcher followed the QMU Research Ethics Guidelines, Procedures and Regulations (2011).

They along with the common ethical standards state the following practices that were implemented in this research (Gilbert 2002; Neuman 2004; Christians 2005; Bailey 2007; Audi 2009; Lapan *et al.* 2012). One of these is *informed consent* which refers to the participants voluntarily agreeing to take part in the research after receiving full explanation of how their replies will be treated. As mentioned in 6.4.1 above an information form was presented to and a consent form (Appendix Five (p.304)) signed by each participant prior to taking part. The research was honest and *free from deception*. *Confidentiality* was granted, hence all personal information is secured and all published data will be anonymous (Wengraf 2002; Punch 2005; Reamer 2013). Participants had every right to withdraw at any point and they did not need to give reason. However in this research no one withdrew. *Accuracy* was taken extremely seriously by the researcher and the methodology and participant selection were carefully considered.



Community research can bring up sensitive topics (Renzetti and Lee 1993). In sensitive social studies the outcomes of the investigation could have an impact on people and their community (Renzetti and Lee 1993; Kane and Brun 2005). The research relations must be built on respect, trust and honesty (Seale 2004; Christians 2005; Babbie 2007; Minkler and Wallerstein 2008; Bradbury and Reason 2008). This research included some vulnerable people especially within the deprived parts of the ward. These were for instance people with little education, people with learning difficulties, socially or economically vulnerable groups such as unemployed people, and elderly people. Since they may feel ashamed, Oliver (2010) emphasises that their responses might not always reflect the truth of how they would naturally react to such questions normally. This is due to being very aware of their situations when taking part in the research. However it is found that personal one-on-one interaction reduces their anxiety and produces adequate results (Minkler and Wallerstein 2008; Oliver 2010; Quimby 2012). Seale (2004) and Long (2007) stress that the opinions of the vulnerable be respected and viewed as real and strategic as they are capable of reflecting clearly on complex matters even if in some areas they are not as competent. Encouraging them and treating them equally will make them comfortable and relaxed in taking part. The researcher has to recognise the differences and the uniqueness of individuals while treating them with consideration (Denscombe 2002; Grbich 2004). The application of one-to-one interviews rather than focus groups was further justified in order not to exclude anyone whether they had or had not any disabilities. Interviews thus supported the inclusion of all people, providing a safe and trusted environment for participants to communicate their views. During the data collection the utmost attention was paid towards the code of ethics at all times in every single case.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has explained in detail how the case study research was undertaken, using semi-structured interviews. It has also been explained that the researcher is an insider researcher, as she lives in the ward, but she had no background knowledge on the research subject which reduces biases and increases objectivity.

Sampling methods for participant selection were in the form of non-probability purposive and snowball sampling since people familiar with the ward and its community education services were sought. Interviews were carried out with managers, local councillors, community councillors, MPs, MSPs. Instead of focus groups with local people, the trialling of which did not prove fruitful, one-to-one interviews were carried out with them. Those interviews were typed up one by one by the researcher. Data analysis started just as the process of interviewing started. For this, qualitative computer analysis software (NVivo) was chosen to store and group the transcribed interviews (Schwandt 1997; Bazeley and Richards 2000; Wiredu 2011).

The chapter has debated the subjects of reliability, validity, replicability and generalisability which in the case of qualitative methods often alternate with trustworthiness, precision and transferability. The precise transcription of interview data undertaken by the researcher as well as the use of computer software for data analysis have aimed to support such characteristics of qualitative methods in order to make the research as authentic as possible. As the research is focusing on one particular ward, the findings of the research are not generalisable but might have relevance to other areas (Swanborn 2010; Quimby 2012). The chapter has closed with a discussion about bias in research and then ethical considerations.

The following chapter presents the research findings.

## **Chapter Seven – Findings**

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### **7.1 Introduction**

One of the objectives of the research has been to identify the key stakeholders within Forth Ward and discover their perceptions so as to have a comprehensive view of the ward and its service provision in relation to performance of community education services. This objective has been fulfilled within the primary data collection process and is now presented in this chapter. The overall aim of the chapter is to describe what the stakeholders noted about the ward and its relationship with the local authority, local community education service provision and its performance measurement. The chapter will refer to the content of the interviews and analyse participants' direct quotations.

The chapter starts with the opinions of the interviewees about the ward and its relationship with the council before setting out their comments about the various representative bodies such as community councils and the Neighbourhood Partnership. It then describes the findings about the role of community education services, explaining in some detail the significance interviewees placed upon community engagement and information. The later part of the chapter focuses on performance measurement. It reveals the views of all stakeholders on performance and describes the whole process as it takes place within the local community education services at ward level.

#### **7.1.1 The interviewees**

The following abbreviations are used for the varied segments:

A - Activist (local resident who engages in community life)

AS - Audit Scotland officer

C - Councillor (local councillor representing Forth Ward residents)

M - Manager (of a local public service in relation to community education in Forth Ward)

P - Politician (MP or MSP representing the area of Forth Ward)

R - Resident (within Forth Ward)

Area 1 – Muirhouse, Pilton and surrounding locality

Area 2 – Granton, Wardie and surrounding locality

Area 3 – Trinity and Newhaven and surrounding locality

The term stakeholders will be used to refer to activists, residents, managers and councillors collectively.

The term policy-making community includes politicians and councillors.

## **7.2 Perceptions of the local authority at ward level**

The factors that impact on the ward's community life need to be discussed in order to comprehend the everyday life of the locality. This will allow the reader to appreciate the settings in which local public services operate and in which their performance is measured. The relationships among the individual, the locality, and the state are expected to a certain degree to influence the behaviours and thinking of local residents. Therefore, it is important to provide some context as to the circumstances within which the study participants operate, in addition to that provided in Chapter Two.

### **7.2.1 The ward and local government: Forth Ward's relationship with Edinburgh Council**

A common theme in the interviews was dialogue around the relationship the ward and The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) had. This aspect was likely to impact on residents' perceptions and expectations as the dynamic between the ward and the

council was regularly referred to amongst interviewees which indicated the seriousness of the topic.

While a large number of participants understood that wards were created for electoral purposes (P2, C2, M10, M13, A3, A4, A6, A7, R8) the way boundaries were established were often considered to disregard an area's natural identity and similarity to others. Managers like M13 and M10 accused the organisation deciding on ward boundaries of deliberately cutting areas up in order to mask the severity of local issues as well as to ensure areas did not have substantial power. Numerous participants agreed to the aforementioned views as they admitted to having the impression that the creation of the ward had taken away power from the people of the area (M4, M10; M13, A1, A3, A4, A5, A6).

*This ward is with a better off area and what it does is when you look at the statistics [Area 1] is actually not too bad. It makes it look like this area is quite good, not too bad (M13).*

*Even Forth is segregated. MP is different even within [Area 1]. Council create these divide. I struggle with the whole concept of wards and if you give me a map of Edinburgh I will not know the boundaries (M10).*

The concerns surrounding ward creations led participants to question the power dynamic between the ward and Edinburgh Council. Managers, local councillors, activists and residents as one reached a consensus that suggested a top-down approach between the two which seemingly meant that the ward did not appear to have significant power (M1, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M15, M17, A1, A4, A7, A9, R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12, R17, R18, R19, R21, R22, R24). These quotes illustrate participants' views:

*Edinburgh Council has all the power and its link with the ward is not too good since no matter what the people in the ward would like to change or see a difference of, it all happens here [in the City Chambers], not in the ward (C1).*

*It is very much council policies dripping down. ... Joined up work does not exist between the local council and the community (M1).*

*At the minute it is very top-down approach with the council having the power. When groups become too powerful in the council's eye then the council cuts their funding or they, in the form of a mysterious person, try to cause tension*

*between the members. ... I don't think council people want local people to have the power. (M10).*

*If you looked at democratic structure at the local level, they are very weak actually we have a very centralised distribution of power in this country. (M11).*

*I feel there is a massive disconnect between people who live here and the conversations. There was a drop in few months ago which was good quite a few people there but there is a difference to people being part of decisions (A2).*

The tension between the ward and the council was likened to a dysfunctional relationship that participants perceived was due to the mistrust the council had for locals.

*The relationship between local people and the council is like a broken down marriage, it is so difficult to have a form of communication, there is no trust. The relationship is just so sour. People just feel the council is so inept, unable to do its job (M10).*

*The council don't believe in local people. They are so suspecting when local people get together as it is alien to their thinking (A6).*

Local people seemed to hold the council responsible for not trusting in them. Locals too collectively appeared to report a sense of distrust towards the council (R1, R3, R7, R8, R9, R11, R13, R14, R15, R16). Such suspicions from both parties towards one another arguably created very difficult conditions within which both sides operated especially when one side needed to deal with the other.

There were differences of view amongst participants when it came to discussing the level of understanding the local authority had of the ward. Despite considering that power over the ward was firmly in Edinburgh Council's hands, participants were torn whether the council was truly aware of the area's needs. The majority of participants believed it was aware (P3, M2, M3, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M11, M14, A4, A9, C1, C2, R5, R9, R12, R17, R18, R21, R22, R23, R24) while many participants argued that the council did not understand the ward (M12, M13, M15, M17, A7, A8, R1, R2, R6, R7, R8, R10, R13, R19). Regardless of whether the council was aware of local needs or not, many interviewees seemed dissatisfied with how the council approached and delivered upon the expectations of the locality (C2, M6, M9, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, R13). Some participants blamed the perception of area stagnation

on the shortage of funding which the council had at its disposal (M15, A8). Others like C2 argued that it had been a deeper issue because the allocated funds which deprived areas had always been getting – even before the recent economic downturn – did not prove substantial enough to uplift those areas. Numerous participants (A5, A6, A8, R13) alleged that the deeper problem was the council's negative generalised observation on the area that held it back from improving it.

*There is recognition of the needs [by the council]. Unfortunately the funding is very much linked to certain criteria and numbers by a formula (M5).*

*The money going in to areas like [Area 1 and other similar areas in Edinburgh], are they just maintaining the status quo as it's always been or are they getting better? Probably not (C2).*

*Council has to spend the money somewhere but doesn't seem to be spending it here. They will be spending it on improving the library and such but in terms of what's being seen it is all invisible spend. I can't help thinking that if this would be another area in the city it would be a lot quicker and things would be done. Is it council policy by default? It is, probably not a conscious 'not to play fair in Area 1' but in effect that's how it feels. ... They [council] have this perception of Area 1 that 'it is full of druggies and they live off benefits so why should we fix it for them?' They [locals] are not seen as people and valued (A8).*

*They [council] just kind of think 'oh, just put all the people there [deprived parts of the ward] and have some houses and just leave them there, it will be fine'. They [council] don't think that they [locals] need things (R13).*

Such interpretations that formed around the way in which residents considered that the council was letting the locality down were supported by others describing the council as “a wee bit aloof, removed” (C2) and seemingly not being too concerned about the deprived areas. Therefore, the residents of such parts felt similarly to residents of the more affluent parts when revealing their feelings of being overlooked by the council and not well represented.

There appeared to be contrasting views amongst participants in different areas of the ward when it came to which part of the ward was being better served by the council. Participants residing in the ward's more affluent area (Area 3) (affluent based on the SIMD (2012) indicators (see Chapter Two)) pointed out that services were dissimilarly distributed within the city (R17, R18, R21, R23). They expected deprived areas to get more services and support than them due to those having



additional needs (R17, R18, R24). Residents in the deprived parts of the ward (deprived according to the said SIMD (2012) indicators (see Chapter Two)) saw their locality as disadvantaged compared to certain other (what they described as “wealthier”) areas in terms of identifying differences in the way in which the council operated within areas (M8, M10, M13, A1, A2, A4, A6, A7, A8, R1, R13). They emphasised that not much was being done by the council there either, which they attributed to the scarcity of money and also negative prejudices towards the locality. Participants said that people there felt overlooked by the council with the common view expressed by Resident 19.

*Because it is a wealthier area [Area 3] and their [council’s] assumption is that there really are no needs (R19).*

Whilst there were more initiatives within Area 1 and Area 2 the quality of those local services was frequently questioned by interviewees. Residents in the deprived parts of the ward as well as managers observed that in the least affluent areas of the ward services were stagnating while despite numerous initiatives, better results or outcomes for those areas were supposedly not easy to see.

*People in better off areas get better services (M10, M13, R1).*

*A lot of the people think that CEC is set up for tourists. That the centre is well kept for tourists. Whereas a local person described this area [Area 1] as a “forgotten estate”. ... I also found the council’s survey asking people ‘how did they find the city’ laughable. I thought who on earth is the survey speaking to. Had I had that survey with 100 people I am quite confident I would have come out with different results. You read that and it is worthless, it is kind of a joke. 98% are happy to live in Edinburgh. I’m not sure that was done in [this part of] Edinburgh with the people I work with [in Area 1] (M10).*

As indicated in the second part of M10’s quote, many managers, activists and residents also seemed sceptical about council publications that showed the opposite of what those working and living in the area experienced (M10, M11, A2, A8, R1, R5, R12, R15). The resentment towards the council was commonly backed up by recalling instances in which the council’s decisions did not reflect the interests of the ward (locally) and the city (citywide). One such local occurrence was habitually

highlighted: a local primary school was demolished despite protests which apparently resulted in extensions being built to the other one nearby to cope with rising demand. More generally, people explained that not seeing improvements or engagements with locals was what kept them dissatisfied the most. However citywide issues with the operation of the council were also repeatedly outlined and held responsible for the lack of confidence in the local authority. The citywide problems that were regularly highlighted were “the tram fiasco”, a perception of the council generally wasting taxpayers’ money and “the housing repair scandal”. One activist (A2) succinctly summarised the commonly held view of the council.

*The council has got a really terrible reputation in terms of ‘is it corrupt or is it just incompetent?’ like the tram thing as a depressing example and the building repairs big corruption scandal. Edinburgh Council has got a long list history of corruption (A2).*

The above perceived failures, coupled with the general perception that the council were not resident focused particularly in deprived areas, appeared only to create more resentment from residents in such areas.

### **7.2.2 Conflicting priorities**

The tension between the locals’ priorities and the city council priorities unfolded during the interviews, with the interviewees respectively reasoning for their case. In addition to being perceived as voiceless in the deprived parts of the ward, the residents pointed to the supposition that the council did not understand such areas’ needs because in their eyes the council was too preoccupied with attracting tourism and revenue to the heart of the city which will always be well kept to please visitors (A5, A6, A7, A8, R1, R2, R5, R10, R11, R13, R14, R15).

*All the money coming into Edinburgh I would like to see some filtering down to areas like this. They should show visitors this area to see how we live because they see Princes Street and it’s all beautiful but it is like Beirut here now. We have an Arts Centre in Muirhouse, why can’t it be a venue during the festival? Many years ago a travel book advised tourists not to come to this area as it can be dangerous (A1).*

*We get poor service. I am sure if you lived in other deprived parts of Edinburgh, you would hear people say the same. I think the council is a class ridden and class thinking group of people. I think they only worry about the Edinburgh Festival and Art Festival and Music Festival and Folk Festival (A6).*

Investment in attracting tourists to the city was blamed for reducing the level of available funds which deprived areas could receive. While such actions had been long standing, a call and need for fundamental change could be sensed from the interviews. However as one of the participants (R15) reasoned, that was not a priority for the council partly because such change commanded a price.

*Yeah, there's bound to be a way to do it but that way cost money. There is no money going around, is there? By the time you make Princes Street look pretty there is no money, is there? (R15).*

Local councillors were very much aware of this accusation that the council was more interested in pleasing visitors by hosting various festivals. One of them (C3) actively defended the council:

*We have the festivals and events. The Christmas celebration, a lot of the money went into that £1.2million, but the local economy gets something like £27million back. Some people will say "Why don't we spend money in the ward? Why invest in these festivals?" But this is an investment in the economy as people from the ward and across Edinburgh will work in the retail or entertainment sector as Edinburgh is known for it. People should feel that the whole city is their city and they should enjoy it. But of course the local issues that are on their doorsteps need to be resolved for them to come up and enjoy the big wheel and the German market (C3).*

However residents still asserted that no matter how much money the city made out of these festivities, the council still did not inject money from such activities to make the area a better place in which to live. If anything, the council was even accused of taking crucial funds away from the locality. This was a fundamental problem, as phrased by local activists:

*A community centre of Area 1 lost its funding and nearly had to close, it is not that big amount of money of the budget to give a community centre to a vulnerable community, it is short-sighted. A community centre in Area 1 would hold more groups and people than one in Area 3. People there can afford to go to a gym or hire a pitch but not here. It comes back to that - do the council understand us here? (A7).*

*To destroy a community newspaper as the council did, somewhere there is a wee grumbling up in the council, I think, that said: 'if we give them that much power, you cannot give people power, and do not give them any knowledge because knowledge is power...so if you get rid of that [newspaper]' (A6).*

Such action, especially in places which residents argued needed further attention, seemingly angered many participants and prompted a resident (R14) to advise the council to apply better strategic management practices as a whole.

*They should apply SWOT analysis. They need to study properly before making decisions (R14).*

Not only had the priorities of the council angered residents but also the perception that some of their representatives (in both parliaments and the council) were out of touch with the area (R1, R2, R10, R5, R6, R7, R9, R12, R13, R15, R17, R21). Many residents did not know their representatives and perceived them to be absent from the locality's life. While some were seen more than others, often residents reasoned they were more visible at election time which was, for residents, an indication of them being more concerned about their own (political) interests than the locality. Accordingly, many residents would not turn to them in need. Such disengagement with the locality was notable during some of the interviews with the representatives in the form of lack of specific knowledge about the areas they represented.

The perception of a lack of influence and being without a strong voice continually emerged within the interviews mainly in Area 1 and Area 2 where most locals did not engage with the services provided nor raise their voices if they were not satisfied with them. Commonly, their attitude fed back into the fact that they generally felt they had no power or voice. Such a belief seemingly stopped them from being active in the form of complaining, attending meetings, engaging with local representatives and so on. Their argument was around the notions of disempowerment and disengagement and the view that any action they took would have been useless. Many stakeholder groups such as residents, activists and managers jointly confirmed the existence of such passive behaviour.

*I don't think they [locals] are very empowered. I don't think they feel that they can change anything or that they have a voice. Because no one ever asked what you think of about the services. They should be asking what people want (R13).*

*In good areas people petition and are very good at voicing their opinion. In Area 1 people are so busy struggling with their lives and to cope with their situations, that they are not good at this (M14).*

*It is a whole culture of disempowerment: let the system do its work and try to make the best of it. For people to feel heard and worth saying anything they would need to feel like their voices are valued and has the potential to influence. People are not used to making decisions together so we as a community need to relearn it. Lots of skills are involved in decision-making and we are deskilled on how to make decisions because we are all outsourced to experts making it for us. We don't even know what to do with power (A2).*

These revelations to some degree pointed to the lack of support from the authorities towards these localities in the form of engagement and capacity building with residents in order to involve them in the area's decision-making. Local activism has seemingly been affected by the belief of citizen disempowerment and lack of influencing power. Activists in Area 1 and Area 2 are mainly older people and they commonly noted the lack of people coming forward as the next generation of activists (A4, A6, A7, A8). Accordingly, citizens felt vulnerable and sceptical about the future because they did not see the council changing its way towards areas like theirs. A number of residents (R6, R7, R9, R11, R13, R16) seemed particularly worried about the future for the generations to come if operations remained the same because locals sensed that the area would get even worse in the future.

### **7.2.3 Community Councils and the Neighbourhood Partnership**

A matter frequently raised in the interviews was that often council decisions were seen to be ones that locals felt were not appropriate for the area. This they perceived despite the availability of many forms of public representation in the locality that the council could get input from to guide its governing. Such bodies, in the form of Community Councils and the Neighbourhood Partnership, aimed to represent local views and needs (M9, M13, M17, A5, R10, R3, R6, R17). Despite these managers and residents frequently attributed the decision-making process to reside ultimately with the council without regard for representative bodies or the public. Participants seemed confident in making such statements, for example:

*The council still have autonomy to make decisions on its priorities and often the decisions reached do not reflect the local communities' priority (M13, M17).*

*Someone high up in the council will see what the area needs and that's what they will give them (M9).*

*I think if somebody made their mind up, up there or wherever, that it [something in the area] is gonna [sic] change, it is hard to beat them (R3).*

The value of local knowledge at ward level feeding into council strategy and decision-making was touched upon by many in the ward. The NP and CCs were deemed not to have particular merit in assisting the creation of comprehensive outcomes for the area. Many rejected the proposition that joined up working was present and successful within the ward. They seriously questioned the impact the CC and NP could have on influencing the council and improving the area and its services' performance overall. Some managers described the power that CCs had as very limited and said that a campaign, tenant group or even a parent council at a school had more power than the CC (M10, M12). In light of the shortfalls of community representation, several activists, local councillors, community councillors and politicians alike identified a need for reform of local government in order to better represent locals. Even though this view was endorsed by many, they as one gave the impression that the likelihood of such reform in the near future was very low.

Although the intention of NPs and CCs was the provision of a mechanism through which the communal needs and expectations at local levels would be considered, represented and acted upon, participants from the different stakeholder groups like P2, C1, M11 and AS considered there to be an inadequacy in their operation.

*Present government leaves local authorities to manage so it is decentralising power to them. There is community empowerment but it won't fundamentally [make a] change. It's a good title but I am not sure it adds up very much to community empowerment. I think [CC] it only gives importance in planning applications but I am not sure if there is anything else (P2).*

*The council would say that NPs make decisions in a local level but the strategic direction of the council sits in the City Chambers so I doubt councillors sitting on the NP could do anything about it that was different*

*from what the council's strategic direction is. So that is not going to make much of a difference (M11).*

*The council's public services devolve in NPs primarily ... I think if I am honest they are predominantly talking shops where nothing is really influenced. ... They also have decision-making authority for the neighbourhood environment projects which for this Ward is around £400,000. Every year the local committee and councillors decide how that is best spent. (C1).*

Some citizens also claimed that the NP and the council were not working for or with the community, despite their affirmations of doing so, and thus they questioned the prospect of a better future (A2, A5, R14). Even from an activist's point of view as Activist 2 expressed, such mechanisms were described as problematic.

*I don't know how it [NP] works and it is hard to find out as a local resident - it is not straight forward where to go with questions... Local government could work a lot better (A2).*

Many concluded that the NP did not do, and was not able to do, anything significant. Such strong views as a result were in opposition to the council's intention to improve the lives of communities. In addition, the constraining dynamics surrounding the work of the NP led even a local councillor (C2) to call the ward's NP "a strange, very strange outfit". This was repeatedly commented on by participants, including members from all stakeholder groups of the ward, who similarly found the structure of the existing NP confusing (C2, M10, M12, A2, A7, A9):

*You have the NP and it is still hard for me to understand how all of it works and I was on the [Area 1's] partnership for years. I just think they have taken away all the things that we worked for. We were volunteers, didn't get paid, we gave up our times to do the best for the area. And now they don't care they've just taken it all away. And it is just so soul-destroying. And they don't listen to you anymore. We run committees and the decisions are made. This is what I keep asking 'why am I sitting on this committee when I am not getting to make a decision?' I could be sitting in my house. Because all the decisions are made (A7).*

*The format and structure are quite complicated and people don't understand those kinds of structures. People don't live like that. I read the NP strategy plan from the CEC. It is 80 pages and as a professional I read it but I don't see the connection where local people are and I work with local people on a daily basis (M10).*

*You have got to have a level of trust and open dialogue and people don't feel it is how it works [within CCs or NPs or with the council] (M12).*

A manager (M12) held against the NP the fact that it did not have a timeframe in the way it worked. A local activist (A5) agreed and highlighted that the NP did not fulfil its purpose in that it predominantly worked in its own way rather than involving and consulting the locals. Despite these concerns, one politician (P3) still acknowledged the NP as being a great platform for partnership work.

*It focuses on the service provision. It gets NHS, fire, police and council and people who deliver public services to the public, it gets them all together, that's the principle. So it is a council meeting in public, it is a council committee. This is how local service provision can be controlled so everybody knows what they are doing. It is all based on the Scottish Government's Four Pillars (P3).*

Many managers like M6, M8 and M11 disagreed, with one manager (M8) calling the NP “just another layer of bureaucracy”, while another manager (M2) was indecisive as to the function of the NP.

*I heard two opinions: it is great because the community leads it and participate; the other is that you just put up another layer and if things go wrong you can blame the community for it. I hope it is the former. But in the last two years NPs have been less active. I have not heard anything from them recently (M2).*

Numerous participants like Activist 2 and Manager 11 referred to other small European countries' local authority sizes being much smaller and made the link between their small sizes and better citizen involvement. Therefore, they proposed that maybe this was an alternative for Scotland's future. On the other hand several managers as well as residents believed that if there was better joined up working amongst services, this would result in improved services for the area with stronger links between local service providers sharing their skills and expertise (M4, M5, M21, A7). Contrary to the whole purpose for the existence of the NP, interviewees did not see partnership work happening in reality within the area. The many similar service provisions in the locality were viewed to lead to duplication (M21). A manager (M12) and the AS officer confirmed the need to work harder on partnership working:



*We try to develop better partnership work. So there is a greater sense of shared responsibility. With that we would need to move into more of a shared self-evaluation but we are not quite there yet (M12).*

*There is a lot of scope for public bodies to work together to address that preventative agenda. The challenge what CPPs [Community Planning Partnerships] have is that you are looking at new ways of working with an old way of accountability and governance. So at one hand there is often kind of people protecting their own little patch. Similarly, if you make someone accountable for expenditure within the local authority they are less likely to be willing to surrender some of that responsibility. The question is whether CPPs can achieve under the current accountability frameworks. Part of the problem is that each of the local authorities has its own budget. And they are saying: 'I'm accountable for how much money I spend. If I surrender some of that to the CPP and they spend the money in the least appropriate manner, because I am responsible for that expenditure, I am the one with the blame for that money being spent badly'. That's the kind of challenge (AS).*

Activists, managers and politicians (A1, A2, A6, A7, M10, M11, M12, P2) raised concerns about the role of the CCs, which they criticised heavily by revealing that CCs were currently not what they were meant to be when first established. The commonly held view of the CCs was related to their ineffectiveness due to either some of their members being questioned on how they got elected or CC members being seen as unrepresentative of the community. Participants were of the opinion that these members engaged in the CC for their own benefit often to use such experience as a platform to get into politics (A1, A2, A4, A5, A6, A7). Others like Manager 11, while approving of the original concept of CCs, could not see them as effective, because they did not have the authority or enough funds to make changes.

*Community councils are good things but don't have any power and don't have any money (M11).*

Similarly, an activist (A7) presented such a view by reasoning that the power lay firmly with the council rather than with the CC.

*They [council] let us think we have got power. But if the council don't want you to do anything or the council want to do anything they will do it whether you make a decision or not (A7).*

The decreasing interest in such form of representation was frequently a talking point amongst participants. They predominantly held the lack of power to bring about

change responsible for this, as well as the old structures for communicating which CCs were still following. These structures, participants often felt, were outdated and not illustrative of how locals lived their lives (C1, C2, A2, A3, A5, A6, A7, M10). According to one of the managers (M10) such structures were rather unexciting.

*To be honest some of the meetings are just boring. I'm a professional used to going to meetings but often you just feel bored (M10).*

The views of local people and councillors were that these bodies were neither capable of achieving the changes needed nor of getting to the root causes in order for the area to get better. Local managers (M9 and M11) remarked that parts of the area were still so deprived, after many decades and many council projects which had been set up to deal with the issues. This to them indicated that all the initiatives taken by the council over the years to turn the area around had failed.

*There is inter-generational poverty. That suggests that pretty much anything the council tried so far hasn't had an impact on tackling that poverty (M11).*

Another constraint relating to the bodies was regularly commented on during the interviews: neither the public (A1, A2, A4 A5, A6, A7, A8, R12, R15) nor the local councillors (C1, C2, C3) had trust in community representatives on the community councils, with the public not trusting those on the NP either. Participants reportedly did not see them representing the general public in such bodies but more often than not only their own interests.

### **7.3 Community education**

This part of the chapter predominantly discusses community education in light of its enabling role. The prominence of community education emerged throughout the interviews, especially in relation to the unique social characteristics of the ward. These characteristics were frequently outlined within the interviews as influencers of

local public service provision and its success. This complex topic is found to be a key influencer for the future of the ward.

Community education services assisted with CEC's Services for Communities aim of 'well engaged and well informed'. Locally these were present in the forms of:

- libraries
- information centres
- community centres
- art centre
- youth centres
- youth training programmes
- adult education classes
- adult training programmes
- healthy lifestyle programmes
- community gardening groups.

In the deprived parts of the ward there were found to be more of these services.

### **7.3.1 Community education and less reliance on public services**

Appreciation for local public services was frequently outlined in interviews. Many felt that their areas would significantly suffer if there was no public service provision. Such views led M18 to conclude that public services are "one of the best inventions of the last century". Within the interviews it was acknowledged that locals in more affluent parts of the ward were more empowered. They were capable of finding solutions or approaching officials when in need of information or advice. Such behaviour was lacking in the deprived areas of the ward. Community education as a whole was broadly regarded as a sustainable form of investment in society. Participants saw community education and empowerment as ways of reducing public service dependency in the longer term. As a local activist (A1) reasoned, the council

needed to take such activities seriously since those were intended to improve the life of the area.

*Better communication is the key. [The council need to] Go and speak to people on the streets, empower them, ask them, involve them (A1).*

This realisation was illustrated in the discussions with managers and politicians too. They reasoned that it was through such education and empowerment that communities could progress especially at a time when participants reported on the lack of trust they had in the authorities and in the public-representing bodies. Having well engaged and well informed citizens was also one of the intentions of the relevant council department (Services for Communities – see Chapter Two section 2.5).

The overall consensus that managers reached was the lack of an overview of the area and its underlying issues. They argued there was a lack of a holistic approach to tackle the issues commonly pertaining to individuals in the locality. The individual visited different professionals for different matters which led to a segregation of issues instead of having them dealt with by a holistic method which, they considered, would have made a way for the deeper issues to be solved. Hence currently these deeper issues were not resolved. One of the residents (R12) likened this situation to treating a serious illness. R12 explained in further detail.

*You can have somebody with a serious illness like cancer and all sorts of bandages put on which heal some of the external hurts but they don't deal with the deep endemic problems. And I would see the deep endemic problems as being part of our much much [sic] wider cultural, our political culture (R12).*

Meanwhile other managers (M11 and M9) also described from a practitioner's point of view the way in which these deeper issues were present within the ward.

*GPs dealing with chronic disease - they don't have time speaking to people about healthier options. Teachers are so busy teaching the national curriculum they don't have time to try to understand the particular problems kids in this area have about lack of opportunity and ambition. The housing office is so busy dealing with antisocial behaviour they don't have time to deliver services which might have prevented antisocial behaviour happening like support at the start of the tenancy to understand obligations and rights. So it is difficult (M11).*

*That's them at the council fire-fighting, keeping things going rather than thinking what they could give to these people that will make a real change. At the moment it seems to be you solve one problem each as they come along and then once it happened you are back to the beginning with the same people with the same problem again. It is a constant rotation of things going round in circles. I think there is room for progress, big changes to be made (M9).*

The work of community education services was perceived to be crucial for tackling this complex matter, to spread the word and provide knowledge which in turn could potentially change attitudes and behaviours. The different segments of stakeholders found the provision of such services important for varying reasons. Managers argued that long-term investment was crucial for a sustained change to break the cycle. Politicians like P3 stressed that deprived areas had to be advanced in order to make them compatible with foreign people acting as competition in entering the country and city. Managers like M11 and M12 admitted that as authorities did not at the present time know of a sure method of sustainably improving an area, community education services appeared to have potential for sustainability by empowering individuals.

*The best [idea] we have got at the moment is that you need to take action and you cannot just do it individually as an organisation. So it is: providing universal good quality services; supporting families at early stages and finding different ways to do that in communities; building strong communities to look after each other. It is empowering people as well. Supporting them to get what they need. To ensure we have articulate citizens being in charge of their own life and family. And that's a challenge as local authorities, bureaucracies, are not used to working that way. They used to come in, decided - this is what we do - and just go ahead and do it. ... It's very little about medicine and much much [sic] more about social connectedness. A sense of self-determination; people feel that they have a stake in their own community (M12).*

*We have to stop what's happening in Area 1 and the likes and educate them because the competition is coming from the Far East, China and India. ... Education is the key for us here (P3).*

*[What we need is] long-term projects, consistency. People are overly reliant on officers and help to get through life here. You want them to have confidence to be able to solve their problems. You don't want them to rely on public services to solve their problems. Have people living independently. It would need quite a big support and long-term project because we might have*

*third generation poverty here now. The mindset of people here is very difficult to change (M11).*

These perspectives highlighted different ways in which community education can help. Even while participants realistically agreed that progress was not without difficulty (as it required further trial and error and learning from the authorities' side) they also urged the local authority to be more flexible in its ways of operating to achieve this result: better engaged, informed and educated citizens. Many managers accused the council of not working with the locals and for the locality. One manager (M10) reflected on this:

*While in the '70s CLD [Community Learning and Development] was about empowering people, now it is a top-down, enabling a service. There are comments how there is a reliance on community learning and development. I think local people could be taking more responsibility for themselves. It is not easy and takes a lot of time and work with individuals but it is essential if you want a strong community who can do things for themselves (M10).*

In Area 3 of the ward, education was seemingly renowned for its high standards and reportedly played a key part from an early age in that locality. In middle class areas managers implied there was a wider access to education funded by the family unit and later on in life funded privately by the individual. Residents pointed out that education in the form of local schools was renowned, so much so that their reputation attracted young families who tended to move into the area in order to enrol their children in those schools (A9, C2, R18, R24). Some participants noted that there seemed to be a sense of self-worth instilled in individuals residing in those areas. Manager 15 expressed this in greater detail:

*The average spend on a child in this area [Area 1] is eleven years in education as they leave school the first chance they get at 16 whereas in Area 3 as well as the eleven years they also have two years of college, four years university and often they continue to invest in PhDs. Two to three times more investment in Area 3 for a child than along here (M15). ... A typical family in Area 3 stay in privately owned property and parents are both in employment and university educated and have personal transport so children go to after school classes such as piano or ballet lessons. They go to the cinema and theatre and have two holidays a year. An average family in Area 1 is a single parent family living off benefits. No personal transport and very limited*

*classes for kids after school. [Therefore, it is the public services' role] making sure low income families can access social opportunities (M15).*

Education in the other areas of the ward frequently appeared not to have played such a big part in people's lives from such an early age. Many often reasoned that this was due to not having a good experience of learning in the more deprived parts (M5, M11, M13, M14, A6, R2). Local teachers in Area 1 and Area 2 (M14 and M20) pinpointed a common problem in deprived areas, that regularly children arrived at school unprepared to study due to coming from households that had serious issues. Often, as teachers explained, it was a result of addiction, drink and drug use, money concerns, different male figures, etc. These issues impacted on the children thus: *"children would come to school with a lower level than for example in affluent areas so first they had to be socialised before they were capable of learning"* (M14). Therefore, reportedly, school years were often not as fruitful for many children. Education outside school, especially later on in their lives, was supposed by numerous participants to be a means of filling the gap caused by what these children had not managed to learn from their family or at school. Some participants further explained the deeper issues:

*People in [the affluent area next to Area 1] manage their money better. In Area 1 they get benefits but cannot manage their money. They had big TVs but no clothing or food for kids. I've always felt that this was a vicious circle as they see this at home and quite often the girls will become pregnant at an early age and that starts the circle again (M14).*

*Now there are a large number of single parent families within the younger generations. I often talk about this with the schools and head teachers that you have mums sometimes with different kids from different fathers. That can cause great social problems, strains and stresses. That's because of public policy in terms of state provision for single mums and providing housing and benefits. ... The state if anything else encourages them to live like that and it provides. Apart from the fact I think it is unsustainable it is also very very [sic] bad for people's morale and self-respect (R8).*

There appeared to be further need to engage with local adults with the aim of educating them in order for them to become more engaged and informed citizens.

Residents saw adult education as a process that could result in self-reliance and sustainable changes. The potential of such service provision was conveyed by many as the key to enhancing people's lives. They thought it could lead to a better and healthier outlook for the inhabitants and could potentially improve the area as a whole (C1, C3, A2, A7, M6, M8, M9, M11, R2, R13). According to the interviewees, this would benefit not only the area but the authorities too, as presumably those services would not be as overstretched. Indeed there could be a reduction in those services, if there were more involved, engaged and educated citizens. The importance of such services was highly credited by all stakeholder groups, as the areas had had many decades with a bad reputation. Therefore, stakeholders of the ward called for changes to break this sequence.

The promise of community education was outlined in almost all managers' accounts. They perceived these services in their area as life changing for participants. They had many individual cases to back up their points when recalling how involvement in local services touched and helped others immensely. One of the managers M9 saw the appeal of such services to participants and at the same time touched on the absence of purpose felt frequently in deprived areas.

*They [users] get a sense of purpose in the project. It makes them feel good about themselves. It is like being part of a loving family for four months and they miss that closeness (M9).*

A local manager (M19) accepted that it was often because of a lack of education and a lack of positive role models, to learn from or turn to, that locals habitually ended up making bad choices and decisions that could possibly influence their lives in the long-term. Such choices also at times affected the people living near these individuals too.

*This area [Area 1 and Area 2 together] is one where people would not like to live and have neighbours like these typical local people. It is not to say everyone here is like this but the majority are unfortunately uneducated which often are riddled with addictions (M19).*

Managers like M19 as well as local activists and residents highlighted that while there were many hard-working and law abiding citizens in the deprived parts of the ward, there were still quite a lot of people in need of help. According to participants,



educating those people who had multiple challenges in their lives could only assist with these areas losing the stigma they have had for a long time. This would result in these areas becoming more prosperous. Many managers pointed out over and over again that many residents still have problems with literacy and numeracy (M5, M6, M10, M11, M13, M14, M17). They found this to be controversial given that Scotland has one of the most advanced economies in the world. The same managers argued that their hands were often tied as managers of community education services, and reported that even community education services had become different over time and more top-down compared to how they used to be. They detected that more needed to be done and delivered in order to support these areas of the ward.

The community education services that were commonly found in the deprived areas aimed to provide forms of education, empowerment and enhancement to the lives of those in the neighbourhood. Such services were present in order to train local residents and instil responsibility into them in relation to their own actions, in order to break the habit of 'being excessively reliant' on the council and its services, as a number of managers phrased it (M2, M6, M11, M16, M18, M19). According to managers, these services needed to be provided by the state. This was because educational needs were not fulfilled due to the almost total lack of the traditional family unit in deprived areas which affected people's earlier life and thus had to be provided by the education system in later life. Managers 9 and 16 explained that help needed to come from outside the community to the deprived community since it lacked the ability to help itself.

To some degree almost all interviewees wished there was more personal responsibility taken by residents as it would make the area a better place to live in (A6, A7, A8, R10, R12, R24). Locals agreed to the following assumption from one of them that "*[t]here are too many antisocial families in this area [Area 1]. Far too many but it's always been like that ever since I was a boy*" (R8). Such residents were often described by managers and locals as somewhat passive citizens in relation to the area and its development. Hence the term 'poverty of aspiration' emerged to characterise this kind of attitude in the poorer areas. Such a matter was assumed by residents to be tackled predominantly by community education and empowerment

services providing information and engagement. Some underlying causes for this passiveness were outlined by numerous residents who all primarily pointed to the lack of stake such individuals felt they had in the community (R1, R10, R14, R15).

*They don't seem to take pride in the area. So they probably feel left out or not aware that they have a stake in the community. Whether that's their own upbringing, it is what they are used to: 'this is it, this is life' or they don't have the foresight that it can be better. They don't feel as participants in their community (R10).*

Residents also linked this passiveness to certain cultural characteristics surrounding those families which they had branded antisocial. Resident 5 emphasised that such culture was often underpinned by addiction:

*Well, it is a culture of not working. Taking as much of public money as possible. It is a culture of laziness. There are lots of junkies here and alcoholics. The culture here is not really well developed (R5).*

Community engagement and education services such as providing information came to the fore amongst many participants who agreed that providing more services like these was key to tackling such a culture while helping families to cope with their personal circumstances. Amongst many residents, one of the activists (A6) explicitly linked the need for education to the life of some in the area.

*You can always spot poor people: they talk and act differently; their attitude is different because you cannot see any kind of self-worth. I passed a girl this morning who was pregnant and the guy who was with her, he was on drugs, you could see it. And I thought: 'look lassie, if you felt good about yourself you would dump him. You would say: this baby is gonna have a better life'. But who helps that young woman? And you don't know what circumstances people have but that's about poverty - that's a different kind of poverty. I think that's poverty in learning. I think adult education is so important. So everybody is learning. You can learn more outside than inside a school (A6).*

For a real change in this matter, managers and policymakers argued that prevention was essential. The aim should be to provide lasting skills to locals. Eventually this would reduce the need for further help and thus make fundamental as well as permanent, positive, changes in self-reliance. They also pointed out that the poverty present in these local areas was far from the poverty in poor countries, rather it was a poverty of ambition.

*Poverty isn't just about money; it is poverty of ambition which leads to poor education, health, housing and communities. One of the solutions has always been to inject a bit of money into such areas so they will improve housing stock, build new houses or a school or community centre and they call that regeneration. They try to improve the environment which people live but that doesn't tackle lack of opportunity and ambition - the two main things. Without tackling that and creating jobs actually any of the other stuff is not going to address it (M11).*

*There will be nice new houses and they will be nice for a period of time but if you don't change people's views and minds who live there, they will treat the houses the same as they treat the houses here now (M6).*

*If you want to help the community, there needs to be something in the community to help them as they are helpless, which makes people even more depressed (M9).*

There was consensus amongst the different groups of stakeholders of the ward that unless this perennial matter concerning a change in social, human capital was addressed in a meaningful way, no amount of regeneration focusing solely on the physical capital was going to be successful (P3, M2, M6, M7, M9, M11, A1, A3, A8, R1, R5, R10, R11, R12, R15, R22). For such a change, community education was claimed to be essential. They appeared eager for the council to operate in more efficient ways and for that they saw self-reliance and less dependency on services as inevitable. Therefore, the work of the department that delivered information and also improved engagement levels with services and the community in the ward was perceived to be particularly vital. Managers jointly urged those in authority to secure these community education services.

Residents, activists and service managers all strongly warned that community education initiatives were not achieving lasting changes. This was because very often these initiatives did not last long enough to keep changes going and they were not broad enough to reach and include all those who were in urgent need of such services. Many claimed that the efforts needed for a lasting change might seem expensive at first. However the affected areas would reap the benefits of such investment before long, as the investment would start to pay dividends. Stakeholders saw this as the sensitive and much needed way forward and even perceived it to be more effective than handouts in the form of welfare benefits to affected people (R1, R5, R7, R9, R10, R12, R13). Their rationale was the belief that, in the longer term,

investment in community education would bring lasting positive results and would be sustainable as it would change people's attitudes and broaden their understanding. However, nurturing such initiatives, and a more approachable attitude from the council was noted to be essential. Many residents did not think either of these existed, as they often pictured the council as being against them rather than with them. Some (R1, R3, R10, R24) added that the achievement of greater results would be further assisted by developing a shared community spirit, and investment into the area paired with an instilment of pride in people taking control of their locality and families.

Community education manifested itself differently in the diverse parts of the ward. In Area 3 interviewees admitted to feeling empowered and self-reliant and did not identify a need for state-provided community empowerment, education and development services, insisting that they already possessed such skills and the knowledge that those services could provide. However they enjoyed using library facilities and similar facilities that allowed them to broaden their existing knowledge but they reported not using those services frequently. What they highlighted time and again was the importance of education (the universal provision followed by higher education) which they credited with empowering and preparing them to be independent and responsible adults and citizens. The residents of the affluent area of the ward shared the common view that in the deprived parts of the ward adult education services needed to be stronger in order to support those areas to move forward (R17, R18, R19, R22, R23, R24).

In Area 1 and Area 2, public service managers like M6, M7 and M11 generally insisted that there were plenty of community type activities. However managers also admitted that most residents did not know about them and did not engage with them, which highlighted some of the challenges in the way they tried to reach out and involve residents.

*A lot of people live in the area but don't actually use them [community education services]. Walk past the door every day and never cross the door, people just kind of go about their business, never took a glance until one day they come and try an activity. A lot of people don't come in until their children start school and they want to do family activities - things like that, so a lot of our engagement is done through schools or nurseries (M7).*

The need for better engaged, informed and overall empowered citizens in the deprived parts of the ward was further stressed especially since locals were perceived as being preoccupied with their lives and their challenges. This perception led to another issue being raised. Managers and representatives commonly noted that frequently residents did not look for those services that could offer help and were available in the community. Residents often ignored the problems they faced and did not look for solutions until it was too late (P3, C3, M2, M6, M11, M13, M15). These stakeholders once more blamed such behaviours on the lack of education which this segment of the community had, as they were unaware of what to do in challenging life situations. Therefore, the managers further stressed the importance of those services engaging and informing citizens. They called for those services to be further broadened in order to reach out to such people as they often would not get involved by themselves.

People not looking for services that could provide help fundamentally impacted on the job of managers who provided community education services, and wished to make people more informed and more engaged. Therefore, there was dialogue around the need to provide more information to residents in the area. Lack of information about what was available and happening in the area was frequently remarked on by participants (A1, A2, A6, M1, M17, R2, R5, R6, R7, R10, R12, R13). Even managers of local community education services confirmed the absence of information as Manager 17 articulated:

*One of the key issues identified in our consultation was that people weren't sure what is going on and when in the area. There was a definite feeling of lack of information going around (M17).*

A few managers referred to a recent council initiative called Total Craigroyston (TC) within Area 1 that looked into how public services were working for locals and how they could be further strengthened. This initiative was still ongoing at the time of data collection. An involved local manager (M10) explained this project's significance:

*It is looking at the Christie Commission report about how public services work for people and what the barriers are. They did a consultation last year (2012) and came up with seven different themes that they work towards. Every fortnight there is a meeting to get everyone together from different organisations. There is the coordinator and there is someone from housing and health and police and a teacher, CLD staff, Save the Children charity, Council. It is about seeing how the people around the table fit into these themes of TC. It is a good way to find out what is going on in the area. It is good for networking. TC paid a company to do the consultation but some feel that consultation was not wide enough. They only spoke to about 200 local people where many think that it could have been expanded (M10).*

This relatively small number meant that most residents who were interviewed for this thesis did not hear or know about the project at all and so its intended contribution was not commonly appreciated.

## **7.4 Performance measurement**

### **7.4.1 Introduction**

This part of the chapter is dedicated to revealing the findings from the interviews that were undertaken with service managers, local residents, and the policy-making community (politicians and councillors) in relation to performance measurement. Their opinions were central to the research in order to understand performance measurement in the ward. This is particularly important in light of services aiming for well engaged and well informed citizens.

The conversation with the Audit Scotland officer was vital for providing a different perspective on the subject from an auditor's point of view. This helped with understanding of the wider context as well as the local.

#### 7.4.2 The culture of performance measurement in the Scottish public domain

Numerous managers stated that the public sector had not been expected to measure its performance in the past due to it being seen as unmeasurable. In many cases managers regularly described that when they started to work in public services twenty odd years ago, there was no such thing as performance or measurement within their service. Lately performance had rapidly changed the nature of the public sector forever (AS, M3, M13, M16). Arguments formed around this change, which led some to conclude that it might not necessarily have contributed to a more fruitful sector. AS and M16 reflected on the changes within public services created by performance measurement over time:

*20 years ago there was not nearly so much performance management, measurement and culture within public bodies. They now have started to do that - there is probably still too much focus on measuring input and needs to be much more focus of measuring outcomes of public services on people's lives on a much more longer term (AS).*

*To be honest with you when I started over 20 years ago nobody thought about these things and it has become apparent that you can measure numbers, how many is in a group but how do you measure somebody's confidence compared to a year ago? We have not got a system doing that. So this is not particularly natural to me but I do understand the need for it. And I can see the logic of it. What I do have some concern about is that balance - workers actually doing real work and that information for that. So you have to be realistic (M16).*

The above quotes draw out two things: the importance of looking at outcomes, and what managers often reported as one of their main concerns about performance measurement: being overly focused on measuring. Despite the fact that managers understood that a form of accountability was expected from the sector for proving that taxpayers' money was spent efficiently, they tended to not be entirely satisfied with this. The reason was the notion that performance measurement was taken from a sector that looked nothing like the public sector. Private sector principles were being enforced within the public sector. According to managers, what might be expected from performance (i.e. clarity and improved service provision) then just did not

match up with the reality. This argument was reinforced by the common views that managers expressed within the interviews:

*Performance is a necessary evil (P3).*

*In the private sector there is a profit motive - in the public sector there is usually a service motive. It is about providing the best service you can to people. We don't see units as people. I understand why in a factory they want to use management techniques but when we look at some of the methods lifted from business and applied to work that relates to people work, it is very strange and doesn't take into account what people are dealing with. It doesn't take into account personal circumstances (M13).*

For many residents also, the whole notion of performance seemed rather strange, taken out of context and artificial when proposed by politicians (who – they perceived – had no connection to poorer areas) and applied in the public domain. There are different sectors involved in working with the council providing public services. These are expected to operate like businesses. Many saw problems with operating like a business as these were working against making the local services as effective as possible. Numerous activists offered a deeper explanation:

*They [the higher up council workers] don't come down - they phone so they see the statistics but don't see the people. There are exceptions - there are one or two really good folk. But in general I don't think they understand the folk here (A8).*

*Some people understand the area better or some's job is so professionalised that it is not apparent that the council's job is to make people's life better. There are arm's length businesses which still operate as part of the council and have to operate like businesses. It is a different kind of driver than the wellbeing of the people of Edinburgh which I would suggest is what the council's job is (A2).*

*I find that [performance] is keeping some academic, some businessman in a job. What we have got now is a government and a council who want to see changes at their end and they don't even know how to do it. I think it is a piece of nonsense about performance. Who are they performing for? Any organisations should be performing to the people they serve: clients, customers, that's what performance should be about. It is not about what politicians dream up (A6).*

This was a common view that argued against the business-like nature of public services, namely the core principle of NPM. In addition interviewees perceived performance to be complex. It was described as a barrier, an enforcement, to ensure



the authorities and service organisations were doing something (R13). The consensus among local managers was that measuring performance in community education and related local services, engaging and informing residents, was a task that was extremely problematic. Politicians accepted that measuring objectively was difficult in the public domain especially when many services involved subjective aspects. One of the politicians (P1), while considering that some elements could be measured, accepted that others were not so easy:

*Cutting grass, you can measure it. When it comes to education, it is much more difficult (P1).*

In spite of the measurability problems, politicians and managers alike appreciated performance measurement and called it necessary in order to know where their services stood. Therefore, they accepted that, in principle, performance measurement assisted with improving services. It was assumed to be beneficial when performance measures were connected to the provided service. As a result, policy makers (P3) and managers (M21) outlined the importance of performance measurement in the direction a service took:

*Everything is based around the Single Outcome Agreement [SOA]. ... We have SOA at local level. I think there is about 18 or 20 in Edinburgh, that's what the council have to manage here. As far as the national agreement goes we need these OAs because COSLA are telling us are we hitting the targets? So for Scottish Government it is very important. It is only through measurement that you can go in the right direction (P3).*

*It is obviously vital to measure performance because you need indicators of how you are doing. You need to be able to look back and see 'Oh that worked' (M21).*

The local councillors all agreed that having outcomes was vital because as one of them (C2) articulated “*everybody wants to get the best outcomes for their money*”. Councillors and parliament members too were clear about the importance of performance. The most quoted themes in relation to this were centred on the agreement that it was “*essential that public resources were prioritised properly*” (C1, C3, P1) by getting the “*most out of people*” (C2) and as a whole “*business monitoring has been helpful because it makes us act a bit more professional*” (C1).

The whole process of performance also seemingly impacted on the representatives by making councillors' and politicians' pledges accessible to all and thus people were able to follow up and question what was being delivered.

In spite of the focus on performance being taken from the private sector, it was noted that performance did not necessarily ensure better results, or 'impact' as a manager (M17) called it. This was in line with the ward's stakeholders' accounts which also suggested that they did not see an effect despite the strong focus on measurement. While managers admitted to the usefulness of performance measurement, they debated the advances in services brought about by measurement. As M17 concluded, managers wish to concentrate on the outcomes of their services:

*It [performance measurement] is really important. Guess the same with the private sector although.... it can be quite frustrating because change is slow coming and takes a long time. Somebody has an idea - it can take a long time to actually become a reality for various reasons. We want impact rather than performance (M17).*

Another manager (M1) indicated that having a 'hands on' manager was extremely necessary and so urged others not to overly rely on performance measurement. Yet the same manager admitted to the significance of measuring and revealed how performance measurement was operationalised in their service:

*On the whole, measuring performance helps us identify what we are not doing well and guides us to the right direction by markers (M1).*

It would appear that in their own operation, local service managers looked at the bigger picture, outside of their services, to see what was happening within the area and what was impacting on the lives of the residents in order to be able to respond to that within their services. They criticised performance measures as not able to reflect this broader picture and so they reasoned that performance measures did not provide the whole picture. One of the managers (M1) demonstrated this limitation of performance measurement in the following statement:

*If you say 'how well do you engage with the community between 1 and 5?' and you say '4 out of 5', well who says it? It should be about how you are part of the community. It should be a part of the bigger jigsaw (M1).*

Many participants endorsed M1's opinion, saying that measures were often imposed on them, and that it was important that measuring should not be done in isolation but by considering the broader environment that influenced the service. Therefore, they strongly criticised measures that were predetermined away from the community, as those setting them could not fully comprehend the specific needs and expectations of ward residents. This was perceived potentially to lead to user dissatisfaction. Another manager (M21) aimed to harmonise their service objectives with the neighbourhood and said that in that way performance was meaningful. However both M21 and M1 revealed that it was often challenging to keep on top of the neighbourhood issues in addition to managing their own service.

*We monitor our performance rigorously; it is part of what we do. So we tie in our goals and objectives into the wider objectives like the neighbourhood. Our performance is really good. It comes down to do with the fact we are juggling with lots of people's expectations and needs and we have to be on the ball - at the pulse - so we are reactive and try to forward plan and figure out what will happen when and involve the neighbourhood (M21).*

*Lots of us [local services] are bound by local government policies and there is only so much we [as a service] can do without resources without freedom and manpower (M1).*

One manager (M7) also conveyed their feelings through the example that while they were provided with the yearly budget and the alleged authority to manage, they always had to justify to the council what was decided and what would be achieved.

*We're always encouraged to measure our outcomes or performance and plans. We get a budget each year and from that budget we manage. We see what activities we want to put on but the council all looking to see what you putting on, why you putting on, what's going to be the outcome (M7).*

This was criticised by the manager as it meant they could not follow and react to the trends in the neighbourhood which could potentially lead to being non responsive to changes.

### 7.4.3 Residents' views on performance

Performance-related questions seemed to be very challenging for residents to answer all over the ward. They were able to form some general ideas on the notion of performance but they could not address specific services' performance. This was due to an admitted lack of knowledge and understanding even when they actively used services such as customer advice centres, libraries, community centres and various programmes. Another aspect was that, by not knowing about performance, they had to leave services and their effectiveness with the service provider, the council. This amounted to a further limitation for the community. The situation was said to be voluntary and yet it was actually involuntary, as they had no option. Locals did not appear to feel pleased about this. One of the local politicians (P2) and a manager (M17) were aware of such feelings and admitted that locals had not been having much say in their services:

*I am sure they [citizens] would like to have [power to be the judgers of their services] but I suppose they feel that they don't have influence over but they would like to have. And all the evidence shows that public services are better if they pay attention to the users and listen to them but I don't think there is much [sic] feel that they have that opportunity (P2).*

*It is definitely more top-down [council dictates in the deprived parts of the ward]. There are much more active residents in the affluent parts like [Area 3]. It comes down to confidence and people who are better educated and had more opportunities (M17).*

*They [council] tell you the priorities for the area rather than listening to residents and when you ask why the important things are not priorities what locals want to be, they say 'because they cannot be measured'. They may not be measurable but that is the important issue for locals (R20).*

This underlying issue was also noted by activists, namely that the act of measuring instead of being supportive was perceived as being an obstacle to delivering what was needed for the locality. The perspective of not being listened to resonated throughout many of the interviews. While residents clearly articulated the need for good performance, they did not observe receiving it or any other benefits from NPM, which advocates for instance putting service users at the heart of services and

improved performance. As Activist 2 and Manager 10 concluded, this was not expected to change despite the pledges the government made on citizen inclusion. People seemed to hold the council's structure accountable for their general dissatisfaction with the council. They put the blame on the system as opposed to local service managers. Residents appeared more sympathetic towards public service employees than to the council as an institution. This may perhaps be because participants were familiar with the role of service employees who were observed to be fulfilling tasks given to them from above, thus locals did not seem to expect them to be able to influence much. Participants' accounts provided their insights into the topic:

*Public servants are human beings so they probably are more worried about their job and security than the job they are doing. I would like to see a change but there is an awful lot of resistance and status quo against it so it will be a slow change (A4).*

*I met people working for the council who are motivated and try to improve services but there are all sorts of things that make it difficult for them. I feel there is a massive disconnect between people who live here and the conversations (A2).*

*Edinburgh Council is such a huge structure that it struggles to work for a lot of people (M10).*

In the deprived areas, people reported that they felt discouraged and unimportant in the eyes of the council (R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R14, R15, R16), the provider they associated with local services. Residents did not entertain the thought of being the judge of services nor of thinking about the performance of their services. Residents felt those services were the only ones out there for them that could help them and that they could turn to, so they would appreciate them regardless of their quality. In the case of community education services within the ward, people more specifically said that any form of advice, help, engagement or broadening their knowledge by different programmes was better than nothing so they were grateful for them and their existence in general. While many locals in Area 3 admitted to being habitually able to afford to go to private sources for advice, classes or services in time of need, in the other parts of the ward people often had no alternative to turn

to. In Area 3, residents like R23 and R24 provided an explanation for the lack of interest in the performance of any kind of public services, not only community education related ones. They reasoned this was due to them generally being complacent about services:

*Public services - we often only notice them when they go wrong but if you wait until they are very wrong you are missing an opportunity on a day to day basis to make them run smoothly and well, as a routine background for life involves performance management (R23).*

*We all moan ... but basically I, I, I think I'm pretty happy with the services that we have (R24).*

Similarly, in the other parts of the ward, activists and general public alike struggled to assess their services' performance. People in the underprivileged areas of the ward emphasised that while they felt happy having services in their area, this did not mean their quality and work were as good as they ought to be in a disadvantaged locality. Therefore they believed that further developments were essential (A2, A4, R2). Some of the managers and activists (M14, A4, A2) discussed the underlying issues preventing people from thinking about the performance of the services they used:

*People are so busy struggling with their lives and to cope with their situations that they are not good at this [to raise their voices or judge the quality of service received] (M14).*

Locals had a shared view that the authority would not listen to them if they did not accept the service quality (A1, A4, A6, A7, A8). Another activist (A2) agreed, explaining that because they were not familiar with power, locals were not used to making deeper judgements on their services.

*I don't want to slate them as I am grateful things exist but there is always ways to improve, to design ways better which is difficult at a time when everything is measured to be hyper efficient. ... One major underlying problem is power and how decisions are made. Some people know how the system works and manage to get the best of it but the vast majority of people, stuff just happens and they try to get on making the best of it. They maybe never even thought there would be any good having a say in how these services are organised (A2).*

The lack of community influence was also raised by numerous participants amongst whom other activists (A8, A5) portrayed the council as not harnessing the intelligence of people in the community:

*[The council] Just tell the community what's happening. They [council] are not good at explaining. The community feels they are not good enough to be told what's happening. They [council] are cheating people with intelligence (A8).*

*The council intimidate people, this is how they get power. And they are taking power from the people. And I think that's why we have lots of organisations saying: no, you got power, it is about you, show the council what you want and changes need to be made. And that's not there so they just decide everything they want and that's not what the people's needs are. The council should work with the community. I do believe the council just try to make money for I don't know who. I know they are spending lots of money on whatever - big champagne or big parties, I don't know, and we don't know everything but there is so much more they could do with and for the communities (A5).*

Activist 5's quote acknowledges the importance of services that provide community engagement and thus education to empower local people in order to be more self-reliant and have a stronger voice. Similarly interviewees frequently pressed that community education services should be providing citizens with information, engagement and opportunities to support their empowerment. A5 also suggested that the absence of knowledge surrounding the services and what was happening within the area was a deliberate act by the authority in order to do what it wished and so to avoid accountability.

*Never anyone I know (and I know many people) have been consulted or got any letters or a knock on their door. I think they try to avoid people so that they can do their things their own way (A5).*

Since throughout the ward those citizens who were interviewed agreed that performance was really important, specifically restating that it was because taxpayers' money was being spent, they strongly expressed their view that as citizens they had the right to know more about how services were actually delivering (A1, R6, R8, R10, R13, R17, R21, R22, R24). However even activists pointed out the

difficulty of finding accurate and relevant information on the council and performance (A1, A7).

*I don't know where you would get that kind of information. At CC if councillors come and you ask any information they will tell you what they know, well, they will tell you what they want you to know. But that's not going out to other people in the area (A7).*

Likewise, Activist 8 also shared the idea that while the council did do some consultations perhaps because they were required by law to involve residents in projects influencing their locality, those consultations were not serving their fundamental purpose to take on board the residents' views. Therefore, those did not represent the needs of the community and only served the local authority to prove they had undertaken them.

*They [council] do consultation surveys... but I think it is a "tick box exercise" as folks are not told what is coming out of this survey. They ask the community what they want of the Hub but how much can they say on it and they said actually very little so then don't consult us if our say don't matter. Don't do it just to say 'we consulted', that's what they are doing. They consulted on the roof of the shopping centre [in Area 1] and people said strongly to take the roof off the shopping centre and they came back again to re-consult 'do you want to change your mind?' and we said 'no, take the roof off'. They gave them the wrong answer; they wanted the roof to stay [council] (A8).*

The illustrations appeared to highlight that the current way of giving an opportunity to influence decisions was not addressing the desires of the community. Residents expected a clearer and more proactive form of community education service delivery that engaged with them. They described consultation processes as only operating because there was a statutory duty to have them.

In addition, what all stakeholder groups (P2, P3, AS, C1, M10, A1, A7) noted was the bureaucratic nature of the language that the council and authorities used. This was noted to be problematic for everyone to understand. Managers, policymakers, activists and residents alike, regardless of their age, complained about this and some highlighted that the younger generations were having even more problems understanding it. They also argued that the language was partly to blame for failing



to get residents to attend local meetings and participate. Language was a major barrier between the locals and the authority. A local activist (A1) and a local councillor (C1) illustrated their view in the following comments:

*Council have to talk their [locals' and youths'] language. Often I don't understand what the council is talking about with their language (A1).*

*I am sure you have read the SOAs [agreement between the government and local authority on what needs to be delivered and achieved] and they mean nothing, nothing for someone in West Pilton. Probably the council's pledges is a bit more understanding, a bit more understandable but probably mean little to the local people either. It is a system we have got and maybe your research can challenge that to say: maybe if there was a complete change round, you know (C1).*

#### **7.4.4 Processes of measurement**

The whole process of measuring performance within public services was perceived to have become more and more complex. Community education managers shared rich experiences including giving their views on practices within the process that they found ineffective. Due to the depth of information gathered, this section is divided into different themes, for the various components that make up the process of measurement. For more information on the generality for each of these see Chapter Four.

##### **7.4.4.1 Targets**

The literature (in section 4.2) identifies a target as a specific achievable value that the service or organisation wishes to achieve (in relation to performance indicators that make possible the measurement of the overall goals – see 7.4.4.2 below). Therefore, a target could be a number, percentage or other value. Even though there has for some time been an increased emphasis on targets within the public service

environment, some managers still appeared sceptical about the usefulness of targets in general. Managers like M6, M9, M10 and M12 questioned the appropriateness of targets in their settings:

*The council does not have soft targets and does not monitor a person's wellbeing. ... A lot of the time we see statistics and it seems very good but it doesn't really look like that. It doesn't reflect the reality. It's not the individual's fault. They are put under pressure to have these numbers - they don't have the time to focus on each individual... It should be the job of the parents to encourage their kids but because they don't have that, a lot of the pressure is put on services to parent people - to be that support system (M9).*

*If all of these local services were performing really well the area wouldn't be in a difficult position it's in the moment (M12).*

*We can't influence targets. ... The council sets targets based on previous years. They don't really look at the economic climate (M6).*

Targets were at times also perceived to be misleading. This was in accordance with the literature which warned that targets were complex and should be organisation-specific to reflect the capabilities of the service they are set for. Setting targets that are not based on the locality's circumstances and current influencing factors arguably could put management under pressure. Unsuitable targets could impact on the operation of the service and ultimately on its performance. A similar view was held by another manager (M11) who revealed the way in which predetermined targets which did not reflect the reality could affect their provided service:

*My concern is if we are asked to artificially increase activity in a way which doesn't serve the needs of our clients. So if we are asked to increase the number of clients that we see I don't know by 10-20% a week. That might have a detrimental effect on the quality of advice we give to everybody so that's the danger (M11).*

Many of the insights into the operations of local services, related to working towards a well engaged and informed community, were found to be critical of the merits of targets. They referred to the serious consequences targets potentially had for the services if they dictated the direction the service took regardless of whether it served the customers' interests or not. Another issue raised by managers like M17 was that meeting the targets did not give enough time for employees to reflect on what they

did and what outcomes they achieved. While M17 fully agreed on targets needing to be motivating in order to move the service forward, M17 warned that in reality it was often problematic to conceptualise these within the time constraints they were experiencing as a service:

*What we noticed over the past years is that when you deliver and hit targets you have less time reflecting on what you are doing actually. But having time to reflect is very important. We as an organisation find it important that workers reflect after finishing one big piece of work and before starting the next (M17).*

Many managers confirmed the statement that just meeting the targets did not mean in consequence that the service did the best it could (M4, M7, M9, M10, M21). The following management accounts noted some of the challenges surrounding targets:

*We are meeting the targets but we could do better (M4).*

*What we do find is while we are working all the time some needs occur. As you set your target say in January but by April/May some new needs arise so there is new piece of work and you have to kind of address these needs and set up new pieces of work not what you had thought about in January (M7).*

*Performance culture is always target setting. You have to be realistic. If you are always looking for that increase there is a point, when you have a limited population in an area you will reach that point - that how many more people can you get to your service, and that will happen and then it does not mean that we are performing badly but other people will say we are. So it is not accurate (M21).*

Some managers reported flexibility and negotiability with funders in relation to targets (M2, M8, M15, M16, M21) while most said there was not. In most cases managers reported working towards meeting inflexible predetermined targets that were imposed on them, while in a handful of cases the managers had more space to influence the overall targets in their services. The following accounts by managers provided examples of this:

*I do. Because the targets have to be agreed, they are achievable. But if they are not as long as it is evidenced and you have done things towards, it is a fair process (M21).*

*Yes, we set targets with them [council]. ... The targets are achievable. I have a say in it totally (M8).*

*I got targets from my headquarters so we have from above but I have priorities based on here and the community so I need to marry the two (M4).*

*We are council employees, so we have set ones we need to combine before the council but we all meet team management leaders and discuss once a year what the targets are gonna be. So we have some that are set and then we can set some on our own according to our proposition and pace of work, identified needs say, this is what I'd like to do this year and then six month later the review: have we done it, how is it working (M7)?*

Managers seemed more satisfied with and approved of operations in which they were given authority to manage and prioritise their service as they said they felt more able to serve the locality in that way. Several managers considered the targets provided to them as achievable most of the time. This they found reassuring because they had a sense of control as managers over the aims (M7, M8, M16, M21).

Others said they were not involved and the targets were set out without the local service's choice (M1, M3, M6, M11, M14, M17). Such a predetermined method could lead to a focus only on those parts of the service which involved targets and other aspects of the service that had no assigned targets not being dealt with. It meant that they felt that they were not fully in charge of their services. Manager 10 explained:

*You try to evidence for the funders and you know what they look for and you play the game to get funding (M10).*

The caution that targets needed to be viewed only as guidelines also emerged as a theme in discussions with managers. Managers wanted further target flexibility especially as their services focused on human beings and their unique set of circumstances. This could potentially deliver unforeseeable differing results despite providing the service in the same way as before. A couple of managers' (M16; M21) statements offered an explanation for this:

*People might not [always] react in the way expected. And something might not work the second time while it worked before (M16).*

*There is maybe too much data even. I don't think they should be overly relied upon that's the truth. Generally they are [reliable] but sometimes they can be misleading (M21).*

#### **7.4.4.1.1 Residents' views on targets**

Residents' interviews revealed that they thought that targets were more important to the council and service providers than the quality of the service. This perception is in contradiction to the original purpose of targets, which was to improve public management. Residents questioned the legitimacy of the targets with which local services worked, branding them false at times (R8). This appeared to lead to a general mistrust amongst citizens in that targets were not viewed as fair nor believed to be there for their/users' benefit. It was not thought that the services and the council as a whole met the targets (A4, A8, R5, R8, R15, R16) and the level of achievability of the targets also raised concerns amongst people (A8, R8, R13), who suggested that, in order to meet the targets, the services and the council altered their results slightly. Consequently, locals were sceptical about the importance of performance in general for the council, apparently on the basis that the performance system was being abused as the council knew the system only too well (A8, R5, R6, R8, R15). Shortfalls in the system were credited by residents as being why the council was only providing the bare minimum, which most of them argued did not support sustainable changes for the area in order to improve it:

*No, they just provide the services they have to provide at basic level. They don't take a pride in providing services. They don't seem to want to improve things (R13).*

*It should be extremely important. I don't think they do [meet the targets], no. Not really sure who they accountable to at the end of the day. They should be accountable to us. We [in Area 3] are not sure what their aims are. So you are paying for the service but you have no idea whether and how it is actually delivered (R19).*

*I dare say council is ticking off all the big boxes it meant to do but are these services that are important for the community? I doubt that. I think on the big issues they are performing how they need to. The council will never satisfy*

*the folks because they started at such a low. There needs to be so many improvements before folks will say 'yeah, that's good' (A8).*

The performance of the localities in the least affluent areas of the ward in Area 1 and Area 2 was questioned in comparison to the other parts of the city, with the common interpretation being that performance was 'discouraging' and not 'robust' (R1, R6) in these poorer areas. This attracted scepticism on the part of the residents. The whole practice of targets and their meaningfulness was questioned, with residents reasoning that if the targets did not do what they were set out to do, then why apply them in the first place?

*They go and say 99% apples are there but there is an orange there. They will say 'Count them as apples'. It is misleading - it's not right. So the way targets are set means management set their roles out to meet those targets, not to meet what the targets are supposed to represent. ...they know the general public can't understand it, because they are not aware. So yes the council measure things and they probably have some very creative people in the council that can say: 'if we do this, that will make us look like we are hitting the target'. And they pay people to do that. That's where it is wrong. If you don't meet your targets the big boss will say: 'you are not meeting the targets, you will lose your job'. So they massage the figure as much as they can (R15).*

*I probably have seen what these targets are, a print out, maybe a note...I'm sure they meet the targets because everybody seems to meet targets. I don't know if that actually makes a real difference. I just wonder how helpful it is other than ticking boxes to say this is our target (R8).*

Although numerous participants stated a strong opinion on the deficiency of targets and their meaning, Resident 5 highlighted the concern that even those targets and level of service performance would be satisfactory to many in the area.

*For people here with very low expectations, probably they do. However if you have higher expectations and you expect public services to work better than that so for me no [they don't meet the targets] (R5).*

After identifying that so many locals had a negative view of targets, the question presented itself whether interviewees would be interested to know what the actual targets were. The answer to this was mixed. There was a notion of trusting the service itself to know what it had to do in order to provide a good quality service that would be deemed satisfactory to users. For that reason many saw targets as

insignificant for them. In this sense people were relaxed about targets and prioritised the value of the service itself to be of greater importance (R9, R11, R19).

*As long as I get the services then I'm quite happy (R9).*

*As long as it stays OK, yes, I am fine like this [not knowing] (R19).*

Some people would have liked to know the general targets (A8, R1, R6, R12, R13). Interest in knowing the local targets was highest in the wealthier area of the ward where residents reasoned that it was their money as taxpayers which was being spent (R17, R19). Numerous people noted that if they were shown the targets, their voices ought to be heard by the service providers. So they suggested that this was why the local authority was not too concerned to ensure all were aware of them.

*I would be interested to [know], yeah. If I could put my opinion down (R1).*

*Wouldn't find it fascinating but I would look at it. Inasmuch as I am a taxpayer it would be quite nice to have a sheet that showed how much tax money comes to Area 1 and how it is spent (R12).*

*I would like to know about it because a lot of the time we just accept things 'that's fine, that's fine' but actually if you could see the targets as to what could be on offer and ways to improve services than you would support that (R17).*

#### **7.4.4.2 Performance indicators**

As the literature revealed (in section 4.3), performance indicators provide a snapshot on performance and indicate factors that need further attention. Accordingly, managers understood that well-set performance indicators generally helped to measure performance. These in turn were credited with highlighting what the organisation did and did not achieve, thus providing a basis for fixing underperformance (M1, M8). It was believed that previously there were too many Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), but their numbers had been reduced recently (AS). Some, however, said that indicators represented numbers and quantities and because they did not often embody some aspects of the service provided, these

aspects went unnoticed. In the field of community education related services this seemed to be a major factor which was blocking lasting and life changing outcomes. A number of managers called indicators 'hard' and inflexible, and provided examples within their practices to support their observations:

*KPIs make very little changes. If management are doing their work properly they could analyse and say 'this is going well, this doesn't, where to intervene' (M15).*

*A lot of these indicators are indicators of input not outcomes so there is more scope for better qualitative indicators (AS).*

Indicators and their relation to outcomes was something which featured often in managers' comments. The interview data from them appeared to show that indicators were not always tied to outcomes which numerous managers acknowledged as being extremely difficult to manage. A range of examples in relation to the difficulties surrounding indicators could be seen in the following statements:

*Might be that we are judged how many clients we are seeing on a weekly basis without looking at the outcomes that we are able to achieve for those clients. That's the danger that what you are judged on actually gets in the way of delivering service. Because very often these things are just about numbers, numbers of clients or hours (M11).*

*We are human, we support others [the users, in our service]. To plan the outcome before even starting the job is not always predictable to say, same as with timelines (M13).*

Similarly, some other managers questioned the usefulness of performance indicators in relation to their service. A prime example was contained in M8's statement:

*You can get hung up on them, wasting your time on performance indicators. But many of these things are academic and massaged to suit. I'm not saying people would lie but of course you are gonna say you have done what you were going to do. So it can be a little bit of a pointless exercise (M8).*

Gaming (as discussed in section 4.3, massaging figures to fit needs) was identified and openly acknowledged by several other managers (M10, M11, M13, M16). Although personally against such activity, they argued that as managers they had no other choice at times but to engage in it. They saw this as justified on the basis that securing funding was necessary to ensure the programme and service would continue smoothly, for which they had to conform to the superiors'/funders' expectations.



Managers habitually shared their idea of an alternative to indicators by believing that managers in the locality were generally aware what they were to achieve even without indicators being forced on them. This opinion was illustrated by manager 11:

*Most of the agencies located in the local area understand that part of the community that they serve: perhaps living quite a chaotic lifestyle, and [managers] try to make their services as available as possible (M11).*

Because of the characteristics of indicators, a potential risk according to the service managers was that too much was read into them. The auditor body's respondent (AS) suggested that it could never be said that a small number in the results was better than a big number or vice versa due to there being deeper meanings behind those numbers. The respondent therefore proposed that managers had to be extra vigilant:

*The key thing with PIs is that the numbers will not tell you the answer. It won't tell you if something is efficient or inefficient, effective or ineffective. But they might raise a question: 'why is that...'? (AS).*

Not only were the numbers thrown up by indicators perceived as a problem but the indicators themselves were seen as ignoring users' needs and satisfaction. This was something which was regularly commented on as a significant issue by those working in the services. What managers constantly struggled with in their jobs, as they reported it, was that performance indicators did not take into consideration the person, the user of the service. Staff had to lose sight of the person in order to fulfil what the indicators wanted them to fulfil. Numerous managers indicated how this affected the service they provided:

*Sometimes professionals can miss what people actually want (M21).*

*When you have key performance indicators you then miss sight of the person and then it is just about the result. When I worked in training to find people a job, they might want to be an astronaut but you have to kind of almost forget about that - you have to get them into any job. As a professional you are thinking that 'I need that result and I need you to sustain that job'. It is more about the figure than it is about the person. I just find some of that crazy. (M10).*

*When it is not necessarily the best for them [users] but because they [service providers] have the pressure to do that to meet the target, they [service*

*providers] might not make the best decision based on an individual's needs. The school leavers is a really good example of that. ... They tick the box for positive destinations to do something but our programme we run only last for four months. Which is fantastic, they are doing something for four months but if we don't move them on, then that's them - they are out there and they have been ticked off by the council... It is very misleading. A lot of the time we see statistics and it seems very good but it doesn't really look like that. It doesn't reflect the reality. It's not the individual's fault. They are put under pressure to have these numbers - they don't have the time to focus on each individual (M9).*

These views challenged the principal aim of service managers which was they said to serve and help others by enriching their lives through forms of education and making them more empowered and skilled for life. Managers said they found it extremely challenging to follow measurement processes which they perceived as not serving the aims of their services i.e. not ultimately serving the customers. For managers, the commitment to locals was discussed at an emotional level with many stressing a sense of responsibility towards the community and residents in the ward. Since managers to the best of their abilities sought to serve the users based on their individual requirements, indicators in some cases would stop them from doing so.

Performance indicators were also discussed by policymakers. They perceived their own party pledges (that represent their party's stance on key issues) to be what monitored their performance. However even local councillors acknowledged that they were struggling to fulfil their roles as C2 revealed below. The solution they had come to was to focus on only a particular area within the ward by dividing up the ward between themselves:

*With this new ward system I tried at first to represent it all but it can't be done. No one person can be that involved in that entire area (C2).*

The monitoring within the council was one of the key themes picked up on by the politicians (the MPs and MSPs and also local councillors). They believed that the council was meticulously monitored. Different committees were scrutinising it so that any matters within the council could be investigated thoroughly. Policymakers also addressed both the good and bad aspects of performance indicators. One of the local councillors (C1) provided an in-depth account of the matter:

*I think it is helpful some of the red amber and green they use for something. That's quite helpful. Councillors have got to sit on so many committees and meetings and they won't read bulky documents. ...it's helped focus people's mind a bit. I suppose the only concern is that sometimes they can get overburdened, so many of them. And the language is not helpful. We talk here about KPIs and things and people look like they don't give a f\*\*\* about KPI - it doesn't matter at all. I am not sure the language is particularly helpful for anybody at all (C1).*

This insight indicated that the level of engagement a policymaker could provide to a topic or issue was very limited. The reason was that at any given time policymakers were occupied with many projects and working groups. Another aspect that re-emerged from time to time within the interviews was the bureaucratic language still surrounding public service provision (as already outlined in section 7.4.3 when users complained about it).

The National Performance Framework (NPF) was another matter discussed with MPs and MSPs in the interviews. They gave varying answers about the practicality or otherwise of the framework:

*The NPF - there are so many different parts to it I am not sure how they all cohere. I don't think [it coheres] because you have got your overarching outcomes and you have all these indicators. It's almost too much. There is very few about poverty. It is generally praised by the policy but I would prefer it if it was simplified (P2).*

*I can't tell much more about that than what I read as well in terms of there being various indicators appeared to say that we are heading into the right direction in most things. I had a very quick look through the indicators so far but I couldn't tell you definitively. Performance upgrades and lots of graphs on the screen showing that some things like GDP are going up, some are same. From what I can see just on the pictures it is relatively positive but that's nationally. There are a few levels. Just generally looking at the indicators we are heading into the right direction? Is it fast enough? No. but this can't be done quicker. Looking at national level that's fine but how quickly does it happen at local authority level - that depends on the local authority. SOA's indicators will impact on this for local authorities, what they are looking at. So what I can see is positive but there is a way to go without going into the technical stuff (P3).*

*[As a result of NPF] Edinburgh Council has an SOA; it will say things like addressing unemployment and educational attainment and various kinds of performance indicators. The extent to which they will look at individual wards like Forth, I am not entirely sure how it actually, the level of detail they will go into in that kind of area (AS).*

The Audit Scotland (AS) officer's quote above seemed to question whether single wards were taken into consideration in council decision making about performance measurement.

These statements also appeared to show that the reality, as perceived by the interviewees, falls short of the intentions that surround the general concepts of the NPF. The interviews appeared to reveal that politicians were not too well-informed on the NPF when asked about the concept and their opinions on it. Based on the collected data from interviews, an impression was gained about the lack of attention the NPF received from politicians representing the ward.

#### **7.4.4.3 Three Es: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Economy**

The three Es have been discussed in section 4.4: performance is about effective, efficient and economic operations. Managers often emphasised the significance of the three Es, habitually referring to the elements of the three Es when explaining service operations. The usefulness of the three Es seemed to be that they helped managers focus on the basic characteristics of their service. They could consider each of the three Es and judge how well those were met. Therefore, the three Es played a key part within the services of the ward. The service managers commonly indicated that the performance measurement tool which served them best was the three Es (M8, M12, M17, M21).

*Performance measurement is a key driver for the three Es (M12).*

Managers' interpretation of the Es was based on the Es' ability, if paid close attention, to guide a service towards successful performance, by achieving better results, recognising realistic service standards, and meeting the targets while remaining financially sound. Local managers (M8 and M12) reflected on the Es and what they meant to M8 personally in reality.

*Effectiveness is how many people come through the door. Efficiency and economy go hand in hand because it is always coming down to the bottom*

*line. My fourth E would be excellence to not do a rubbish work as nobody would come (M8).*

While in section 4.4 the literature noted equality as a fourth E, managers commonly like M8 referred to their importance in their role to serve everyone to the best of their ability. Equality is serving everyone and excellence in interviews referred to managers doing their best to serve users. In this sense there seemed to be a connection between equality and excellence in their meaning.

#### **7.4.5 Gathering and reporting on data**

A theme that emerged from the interviews was that most managers felt that by far the majority of measures that funders and higher management asked them to use were quantitative. Measuring quantifiable parts of local services was simple, such as gathering information relating to the number of users/visits, their sex, age and address, stated managers like M1, M4, M7, M17, M21. For managers to examine and understand the population these types of information provided very little depth of meaning. Managers stated that ‘hard’ programme measures were favoured for measuring, as they were easy to record whereas ‘soft’ programme measures were less liked due to the difficulty of measuring them. M16 and M21 showed this from the managers’ perspective in the following examples:

*I do understand that it is public money so we want to see a difference. But it is quite difficult when people are so complex. And you are talking about soft measurements ‘am I more confident than I was a year ago?’ and you get somebody on a bad day and he is not confident. If you just say ‘oh, I think she looks more confident, better...’ you have to find a way of showing that, because that just may be subjective and I might think that but you might not. But it needs a balance or you could end up testing people all the time (M16).*

*We measure performance in participation, so numbers coming through the doors, how many use our services. I think it is easy to measure performance but with anything that’s statistically based or numerically based I think it can hide the contextual element of what is going on. For example our figures can be low because of bad weather and somebody can look into it and say ‘that’s bad performance’, but it is more to do with other factors. It is good and bad (M21).*

These quotes were prime examples of the complexity that managers commonly faced delivering services described as being more subjective than objective from the user's point of view. Managers also emphasised the danger that someone with little familiarity of their service and its particular circumstances would draw a very different conclusion to someone who was more knowledgeable. Even funders would potentially misinterpret the results, if they did not carefully look behind the numbers or figures, and managers often stressed that it was a time-consuming task to investigate every figure thoroughly. When determining further action and plans for the service decisions could be based on wrong perceptions.

Managers explained that elements of performance measurement were unsupportive of long-term change. Positive destinations were reported to be one example of this. Attending a training programme of 12 weeks would be ticked as a positive destination for an individual. After three months that individual was very likely to remain without employment but in the eye of the authorities he or she had a positive destination (AS, M6, M9). The scrutiny officer (AS) explained the background of this in greater detail.

*There is a much greater focus on performance and much greater focus on outcomes and PIs. But I think the risk of that as you see the 'what gets measured gets done' kind of thing and there might be an aspect that activities aren't subjected to the same level of targets and PIs which slips off the radar to some extent (AS).*

Another aspect that managers noticed was that when there was too much focus on, and preoccupation with, performance and indicators this threatened creativity and development, which were fundamental to attract hard-to-reach segments of those for whom the service was provided, and to deliver change (M1, M6, M7, M17, M21).

At times during the interviews there were reported clashes between the views of management and funders in regard to measuring. This was the case when the service manager had opposing views on measuring to the funders, as happened in a

manager's (M2's) service. The result was apparently to make the work more complicated as M2 expressed in the following account:

*Performance is measured by volume by the funders. They see value for money in quantity. We measure our performance according to standards, quality rather than quantity. However we have got to maintain the quantity and the quality (M2).*

The interviews also showed that there was slight confusion surrounding the process of measurement itself as a few managers revealed that the basis of collecting data seemed to change every year. Other managers like M17 argued that some quantitative measures they were asked to collect seemed irrelevant and intrusive to the service they provided, such as the sexual orientation of the participants.

While overall the easily gained quantitative data was viewed as useful, it was not classified as the 'be all' ingredient for the services provided by the managers. Especially in community engagement and education, managers outlined a deeper source of knowledge as significant, namely measuring qualitative aspects of the service. This was justified by managers as most of them associated performance with delivering quality (M2, M4, M21). For quality, the collection of qualitative data was deemed appropriate since that looked under the surface and provided rich information from which managers could learn.

*Performance is really important for me and us. It is so important the community has quality and access to quality. So that's measured in the plans that local people benefit and see a difference (M4).*

*I would like to see some way of performance measured in more qualitative ways than quantitative. It is really quantitative. I think that misses the point sometimes. Because it is not about how many people you can get into the building but it is about how many had a good experience and valued the service. If we could put more time into and make it quality as oppose to just try to do everything. And on paper 'but we did all that'. We did 15 events but we could have done five that were excellent. It is getting the balance (M21).*

From what the managers said, these issues seemed more prevalent in providing community engagement, education and information services due to that field being based predominantly on perceived values and soft results. Therefore, managers like

M7 used other means of measurement, for instance when it came to evidence user satisfaction. M7 showed this from a manager's perspective:

*With hard indicators it is really, really difficult to measure how happy somebody may be you know without coming and saying to them: 'can you tell me how happy you were about that?' and it's not the easiest thing. It's not something that you want to see, somebody comes into your activity and constantly filling out evaluation forms so you rely a lot on team photos of group activities or filming, working up things, yeah. We can keep evidence of some way which is not always easy in our kind of work. It's not always about figures and numbers that we can record. We do record statistics how many uses us, how many in each group, you know, that kind of stuff is done but other kind of feedback is not always the easiest (M7).*

The generally agreed reason amongst managers for the use of quantitative measures over qualitative was that quantitative data cost less, was simpler to collect and consistent with other similar services (AS, M6, M11, M21).

*Quantitative info is easier and cheaper. The challenge with qualitative is how to do it on a lower cost if you want to consult with people. I think it's a balance of both. What you looking is the quality of people's life and how to measure that. There is more scope for better qualitative indicators (AS).*

Despite the rationale for a more balanced way of collecting data, a change was considered unlikely for these reasons. However a few managers noticed a current increase in qualitative targets and measures:

*I think it is changing. In the past it was more quantity related, numbers, whereas now they [funders] like to hear about case studies, individual stories where the project makes any difference, the quality stuff (M17).*

*Case studies are a more rounded way than the pure statistical evidence. You write what was given in the service and what was the changes made. I used to get very good feedback from funders because they could see the difference for the families (M16).*

Overall, managers and politicians alike were agreed that there will always be quantitative performance measurement. Their explanation was based on the amount of money provided from the top. This will have to be accounted for and in order to achieve that, quantitative measurement is an easy process.



*Because it is difficult to measure. How do you measure quality? We do measure quality in feedback but we only use it if there is a particular reason, writing a report or something (M21).*

#### **7.4.5.1 Reporting accountability**

A common feature of NPG is the involvement of all sectors to deliver public services. This is coupled with having less available public money. Organisations from all three sectors (i.e. NHS, health boards, education department, other government bodies, charities, etc.) took part in public service delivery in the ward as well as the local authority. However different funders looked for different ways of measuring. Habitually quantity overshadowed quality when it came to measuring service delivery. In the opinion of managers, this was neither beneficial for the full potential of the service nor for the improvement that was expected by users to make a lasting change in the life of the community. The differences between the funders and service providers were sensed during the interviews, as managers admitted to the difficulties caused by performance measurement being more quantitative than qualitative focused. The fact that some services had multiple funders was a further complication for managers. Reporting the data needed to be done differently for each funder in accordance with what each funder expected, which made the work of managers harder. This became a source of potential tension and essentially took further time away from the manager's availability for the service (M4).

A repeatedly stated concern was the rigid nature of performance measurement, something that NPM aimed to reduce. Despite the shift away from bureaucracy and the move to NPM which advocated more freedom for managers to manage, managers argued that bureaucracy was still very much in existence, both in their services and in their management tasks. These involved plenty of paperwork at their computer desks. One of the managers (M15) gave the managers' perspective which appears to be the consensus on this matter:

*They claim it [performance measurement] to be important and are trying to be scientific about it but the reality is for a lot of public service it is just a*

*bureaucratic exercise rather than it having a major influence on the work. This is what I and my colleagues feel (M15).*

Not only managers but some residents like Resident 14 suggested that at present a reduction in the level of bureaucracy of the council was necessary in order to make it more advanced in serving and understanding the residents. Most managers agreed that the bureaucratic nature of performance measurement had a negative impact in that it significantly reduced managers' time. It thus allegedly constrained them in using their expertise as they carried out their job of serving and engaging with their service users face to face (M1, M4, M5, M7, M10, M13, M14, M15, M16). The rationale behind this was repeatedly reflected in their quotes namely that increased focus on measuring at times prevented them from doing their job. For that reason, most managers regularly complained in the interviews of not having enough time for everything they were required to do (M1, M4, M5, M7, M8, M10, M13, M14, M17, M18, M20, M21). The following statements provide a range of examples:

*It's very time-consuming! It takes lots of time away from what you can do face to face unfortunately, and it's quite necessary, quite important but maybe just too much sometime (M7).*

*Here it is about building people's confidence as it is key for being employable. You have to comply with the council's priorities even though there are other aspects too that are important... We have become more and more focused on evaluations and constantly having to produce statistics. We are losing creativity and flexibility, the needs of the community and spontaneity like we used to in community education because there is pressure on the city to be showing to be delivering best practice. And that's taking up my time. Whereas my expertise is working with people directly. Now I am more taken up behind the computer filling in development plans... It has become more driven by plans and pressures from above and below (M4).*

*You can get hung up on performance indicators and frameworks and outcomes and you could spend your time doing that (M8).*

*My cousin is in social work - she says the same thing. My friend is a deputy head teacher and she says the same thing. The amount of paperwork over the last 15 years is incredible. It is so frustrating for workers as you can't get around to your job before filling the paperwork before during and after (M13).*

Their accounts spoke of spending long hours on fitting users into the predetermined boxes so that they could be ticked off. Such activities seemingly did not take into consideration that, as managers pointed out, real life did not happen that way. Thus the indicators and the whole tick box exercise was deemed unrealistic, unhelpful and “frustrating” (M10). Some managers and even politicians foresaw a breaking point in the public sector when appropriate service provision would be impossible (P3, M13).

Therefore, applying such views to their own services, managers questioned just how much measurement was related to educational objectives in their services or else they thought these priorities were simply ‘passed down through a line’ that was not linked with the main concerns of the neighbourhood (M10, M12, M13, M21). Managers provided rich statements on this topic as the following examples showed:

*On the one hand my professional training tells me that I sit down with local people identify the issues and work around that but then I am told by my managers that actually ‘here is the priorities and this is what you must be working on this year’. I have been around long enough to try to bend things but it is difficult (M13).*

*I need to evidence my work to enable future funding but I am not always sure how accurate it is because you can’t capture everything and you don’t know the hidden stuff that’s going on for people. Somebody can reduce their intake of heroin one day and I could report that but two days later he/she could be back on. It is so subjective and quite difficult to measure all that stuff (M10).*

*The Christie Commission also suggests having a more equal relationship between people living in the area and service deliverers in the area. So when we started we had a lot of people taking part to ask what it felt like to live in the area, what services they use and what they would like to be developed. From that we created a road map. It is challenging and slow. It is difficult when there are management with objectives and key performance targets - a lot of them militates against taking a risk and do something differently. There is so much to community development - using all the experience they have got and try to come up with different ways of doing things. (M12).*

#### 7.4.6. Evaluation

A common thread running through managers' interviews was the concern with evaluation and how to act upon the measured performance. Once the results or outcomes were collated, managers had to send away their statistics and paperwork to their superiors who would keep them. According to some managers like M15 and M16 superiors or funders would very rarely provide feedback to the manager. M15 explicitly explained the problem from a manager's viewpoint:

*You fill all these boxes and send them up and get very little or no feedback whatsoever from management on what's happening. I think it is because the last management wants to do is draw attention to their department not doing well. Whereas in an honest and critical culture they should have the confidence to say 'this is not going well, we need to change things'. And nobody wants to do that because the culture is not there which breeds unconfidence. It is an issue, managers are not confident at all (M15).*

This description seemingly cast light on a problem within public service management: the fear of exposure. M15 held the public service culture responsible for holding back managers from being reactive, especially to those parts of the service that did not do well and needed changes. As M15 alleged, such problems were overlooked in order not to raise awareness that something was not working. This common practice was apparently aimed at protecting the workers and the provision of the service rather than the service users. Generally managers expected that not admitting failures would lead to further problems in the sector over the longer term.

Whilst some residents debated whether the council acted upon its performance results, many like Activist 8 rejected such an idea. Residents thought that to act on and evaluate performance was costly and that was perceived to be the reason why the council did not follow up on its service performance (A6, A7, R13, R15, R17, R19). To validate their argument, giving examples that evaluation was not undertaken, residents commonly highlighted the state of the area, and that apparently no major changes to its social capital were made.

*I don't think their hearts are in it. I don't think they listen to what the community says and I don't think that it would change on anything (A8).*

Managers revealed in greater detail what happened within the evaluation process. According to them this was more complex than residents thought. Yet openly managers stressed that evaluation still needed further attention within the public sector as a whole. The process was not taken full advantage of in their opinion. They said that this was often due to the fact that information collected through performance measurement was not used to make serious and lasting changes. The data was not fully followed up or responded to according to one of the managers (M11).

As stated by managers there were many reasons for this. Often following up was beyond the remit of managers since in most cases they had to send away their results for the funders to review them. Then, according to managers, the funders either might have not picked up on a trend or might not have perceived it significant enough to take any further action. Even if they did see a trend forming based on the collected information, superiors in the council or other funders had the power to approve or decline any course of action. Superiors then set the outcomes for the manager to work with and follow. The outcomes were said to relate to the funder's own values, purposes, direction and intention which at times did not reflect the priorities of the locals (M2, M11, M13).

These processes left managers feeling not influential, frustrated, and caught in the middle. Numerous managers' accounts routinely exposed a degree of dissatisfaction that their ideas or views were not quite listened to by upper levels of authority or taken on board when making decisions concerning the service they managed at a higher level (M1, M2, M8, M11, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17). This was difficult for them to comprehend since they reasoned that their roles provided them with such a deep understanding which they argued could only serve as a benefit if higher level management and officials were to involve them. Such an assumption was further supported by their opinion that many managers had been in their current roles, serving the locality for several years - a decade or often decades - thus their expertise should not be underestimated.

On the one hand they had to deal with the bureaucracy including the protocols of the funder(s)'s whereas on the other hand they also met the local people face to face in their daily work. Those people relied on and needed their services, and seeing and hearing them dissatisfied or even just knowing that the service could do (much) better left managers distressed. They explained that this was partly because when they identified a further need of users and knew what the service would need to meet it, that did not necessarily mean that they were able or allowed to address it. They needed to follow the delivery plans predetermined by the council and sometimes other additional funders (see 7.4.5.1) (M5, M9, M10, M12, M14, M13, M15, M19). The restriction of available funds allocated to local projects and services and the current trend of long-term budgetary cuts were also outlined in many interviews.

Habitually managers blamed external factors for not always having a 'robust' evaluation of their services particularly in the past but they felt that it was improving (M12). Some managers however complained that in their constant service delivery and forward planning they were not given enough time to reflect on their achievements. This they argued was necessary to gain a deeper understanding and so improve the service.

Another aspect which managers apparently found the most challenging was the underlying issue, that indicators were unable to pick up on and identify why and how something influenced a person's behaviour. This 'hidden stuff' and personal circumstances were possibly very difficult to incorporate and judge in the evaluation process, especially when using hard measures in the form of numbers (M10, M18). M18 showed this from a manager's perspective when demonstrating what evaluation involved:

*It is time-consuming. When you as manager are doing day to day activities, different organising for projects it is quite difficult to come around it. ... You could hold a separate job just evaluating, it is a post within itself (M17).*

Managers also warned that there should not be any measures that were not followed up or incorporated into the future planning of services. They argued that the function of measuring was to learn, act and improve, based on what had been uncovered.

Hence not doing anything with the gathered information seemed pointless and a waste as a manager (M16) viewed it, yet admittedly it still occurred as managers like M21 revealed that they had data that was not always followed up.

#### **7.4.7 Quality management**

Managers believed that the act of measuring performance was meant to ensure that services were centred on the user and so the process would result in better services (see section 7.4.2). They made the link between sound performance measurement and greater customer satisfaction. Yet a key aspect that managers emphasised was that in their field - which was about engaging with and informing local people - users would not habitually think about what the specific service meant to them (M7). This appeared to be the trend even though users' service feedback was mostly very positive as managers agreed.

Users often saw services as just something they would do as a social activity or when they needed help so they did not think about the service and its quality. Rather they took the service for granted as they had relied on it. Managers thought that their service users were satisfied with the service they received (M16, M21) but they pointed out that gathering feedback was not always simple in their field. Hence managers based this finding of customer satisfaction on their personal interactions with users and the feedback given in a general way to the service organisation. They found the best way to understand their users and their requirements was in face to face interaction and listening to customers. Managers M17 and M12 expressed their views on collecting feedback in the following quotes:

*We are not excellent on feedback gathering. We do case studies... Usually it is quite good (M17).*

*We got very good feedback. We had a meeting and I told them [users] where we are but we kept it without council jargon. And people liked that (M12).*

Despite this positive perception of service users' satisfaction, managers stated that it did not mean that 'all was well'. There could be plenty of improvements within the services they managed in order to meet the demands and to provide a more rounded service reaching all (see section 7.4.4.1).

When discussing quality, residents generally had the idea that in their experience it was more about money than about caring for the users. Residents linked performance measurement with the quality of a service. They also revealed how they saw performance operate in the locality:

*They always talk about budget and money so it feels money is in the centre (A2).*

*I would be happy for them [council and services] I would say not to meet target on quantity but rather meet target on quality (R1).*

*It's [performance] really important. Just so it can be a better place. If they were like, I'm not saying it's bad, it's good but if they weren't as good it would just be a really bad place I reckon (R2).*

While managers admitted to working hard to serve their users as well as they could and so provide good quality services, they outlined an important aspect. They considered that the area needed to be managed. Whilst they did their work in their particular service, the area as a whole needed an overarching plan and that plan needed to be managed. More specifically they hoped that someone somewhere had a vision of how the area would look in years to come. This, they pointed out, ought to be not just a routine exercise to draw 'something' up as often appeared to be the case (e.g. by the NP and short projects), because regardless of the many new facilities put into the locality, if they were not managed they would not prosper (M5, A6, R1). Accordingly, quite a number of managers seemed to question the council's work on the area, in terms of making changes not to the landscape but to residents' lives with the aim of bringing about that long-term vision of an improved area. This was because they foresaw future problems (M6, M7, M10, M11, M13, M15, M18, M19).

*I am sure we still have not seen the worst of it yet and there still will be reductions and public spending for the next 5-10 years could lead to less funding to community run services as public services with less money will*



*have to focus on core services. ... May-be some of the regeneration work will have restarted but it is just gonna be new housing not making much of a difference to the day to day life of people living in here (M11).*

The views of the politicians reflected these concerns of local managers. They admitted that they themselves saw worrying signs that the area, which had started to show improvements before the recession, was showing signs (as revealed by P2, C1, M16 and A6) that progress had started to stall. M12 concluded that the work of the public services was pretty much based on trial and error to find out what worked best. Whilst empowering residents was supposed to be the way forward, M12 suspected that local authorities were not used to that.

*It would be easy to go in and say 'OK, if you stop doing this and start doing that, that will have better outcomes' but we don't have that model. But we have got some ideas we can test (i.e. taking action and partnership work) but we don't have enough knowledge on what would make sustainable change (M12).*

The idea of the council learning from the residents was often raised and reinforced in the interviews by the thought that the council needed a new way of operating. The admittance of lack of knowledge from the council side (in M12's quote) as to what would work for the area seemed to be a breakthrough statement.

## **7.5. Funding issues**

The topic of public sector cuts was regularly drawn upon in interviews in relation to performance. All policymakers were concerned that public sector cuts restricted the council to spending only on priorities. All local councillors (C1, C2, C3, C4) and politicians (P1, P2, P3, P4) for the ward thought this. One of the politicians (P1) considered that public service reforms were lately merely a “*code of reducing public spending*”, and these cuts seemingly then manifested themselves in local services, as “*drastically it [local public service operation] becomes a way of managing cutbacks rather than performing essentially*”. A local councillor (C2) referred to this as ‘salami slicing’ to “*look into what could be chopped off and be done without*”. Local residents likewise spoke of the term when discussing the cuts. On the other hand

another local councillor (C3) emphasised that the deprivation in the area existed well before the credit crunch. The only difference was that currently not having the resources needed, especially when demand was ever-increasing, made the operation of services more problematic.

Managers too said that public sector cuts in fact were not new as yearly cuts had always occurred since the day they started to work in the public domain, often over 20 years ago. They further explained that in their jobs they had always been asked to deliver more with fewer resources, and that this arguably had a detrimental impact on performance. This led some managers to assume that the public sector was predominantly concerned with money rather than quality of services (M2, M3, M10). Their views resonated with that of the locals (A2, A3, A4, A6, A7, R1, R5, R7, R9, R10, R12, R13, R15). Some managers (M10 and M3) articulated the view that many of them held:

*I think in the future it will get worse with the lack of money. It comes down to money it is not about quality (M10).*

*They [local community education and engagement services] very much try to serve the people, I don't have a bad word about any project that run in the Greater Pilton area in Forth Ward. They all try to make a better community but it is down to money always (M3).*

One of the reasons that such views were perhaps justified was the consensus among the policymakers that it was the local authorities who suffered the biggest cuts. They came to this conclusion on the basis that usually “health is relatively protected” (P2) and also that with the added council tax freeze, councils were suffering which contributed to further pressure on services. All politicians found this extremely worrying.

Financial constraints created an environment in which meeting the targets became increasingly important, and services that found difficulty expressing their outcomes in ways that were measurable presumably suffered even more as a result. In view of that, another politician (P3) noted that local authorities needed to undertake considerable change in order to meet the demands of having fewer resources. P3 likened this to a requirement that any other organisation and sector needed to undertake:

*Unless local authorities are actually become leaner and fitter and able to serve in a different way, we are not gonna be able to maintain the service ... Local authorities are like any other organisation: they have statutory duties they must perform and we [government] have to give them money for that. Economic and development aspects have to be done. It is not gonna be easy but the councils have got to change. You have to look at how to maintain a front line service, that's the key thing. Every other organisation has to look at the mechanism to provide that service they have (P3).*

The link between local service performance, cuts and the effect on the community was clarified by another member of parliament (P1):

*You have to transfer resources and power and democratic accountability to perform at local level. And we won't be able to meet the budget. That will cause problems. ... When you cut and when it comes to young people there are more possibilities they will go off the rail. There is no support, individuals are suffering and it's whether you find resources for them. You cannot improve services and reduce spending together (P1).*

Inevitably most managers reported on having been affected by cuts. Some of them had not got any extra funds since the economic downturn, which they clearly saw as lost income (M7, M16, M17). A few of the managers (M9, M10 and M17) revealed:

*We haven't had an uplift of funding so that way yes [the cuts impacted on us]. Venues we use, the prices increased but we kept our programme prices the same - we don't want to cause a barrier. They are only a couple of pounds so it is really good. As costs go up people don't really have money to spend on activities so we had to cut activities to generate income to keep us going. We have been lucky we have not lost any funding as I know other places have (M17).*

*It seems to be the most valuable services and what people really really [sic] need that get the cuts. Public services here are in danger too. There is no evidence that a lot of money is being put in this area. There needs to be something because there are very good people live in this area who don't deserve to live in a negative place (M9).*

*It is hard to feel optimistic here. It all feels such a mess (M10).*

Some managers have reduced opening hours (M1, M21) or staff, due to cuts, hence they needed to cut back on services (M7). These cutbacks were reported as

detrimental to the services and their scope. As one manager (M7) despondently revealed:

*Our team in this area from council workers has been reduced so drastically that we can't offer similar value, support and services as we were used to (M7).*

While the cuts had been affecting the local services, the fundamental problem did not seem to be that of the current credit crunch. A much more deeply rooted, long standing issue appeared from the data provided by the managers' interviews. This was, that the ward services were frequently struggling with short-termism (M2, M11, M12, M15, M16). The notion that greatly needed and valued local services were getting their funds just for a year caused managers to be cautious which restricted them from planning ahead and so preparing for the future. Despite so many managers (M1, M2, M3, M6, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M15) viewing planning ahead as the key to solving the deep rooted issues in the area, they could not commit to longer plans. Some services had been going for over twenty years, funded for only one year at a time, which meant that great opportunities to bring change to the area were missed due to uncertainty as to whether the service would still exist a year later. A range of examples can be seen in the following statements of managers who had been affected by this issue, revealing how it materialised in their service provision in the deprived parts of the ward.

*I worry about the future constantly as we are funded from year to year. We don't know until the month before if we will still get funds so we can't plan ahead and that makes it difficult to retain staff because of this uncertainty. It has always been like this [over 20 years now] (M2).*

*It has been around for 20 years but you always think are we going to get funding for next year? The uncertainty for all is difficult for staff and for planning (M10).*

*As a result of the cuts while before they [the council] gave us a three year contract, now they give us one year; because they don't want to commit themselves for three years (M16).*

*Every approach we get is short-term for these serious factors. 3-5 years and when the money runs out the results are still not there. Some folks managed to reduce their intakes but as the support decreased they increased their intakes too so there were no long-term changes. It is never ending (M15).*

Numerous managers consequently had to adapt to this uncertainty within their practice. Their services had reportedly always been under threat despite being popular with locals (M3, M4, M6, M9, M11). This left managers feeling frustrated and causing them great distress at not being able to do their job as well as they wished they could. This was especially hard when they considered that their services were touching people's lives and so changing attitudes and lifestyles. Such views led managers to be rather pessimistic about the future. As one of them (M19) admitted, without more dedicated long-term funds for the deprived areas, the disadvantaged parts of the ward were not going to get any better in the foreseeable future.

The interview data pointed to the problematic timescale that council initiatives often had. Consequently, the council was perceived as inappropriately having short-term plans for the area. Frequently initiatives only existed for two to three years during which they would perform well yet the time would not be long enough to carry out a sustained change process with lasting impact. Some managers like M10 referred to such initiatives as 'parachuters', while other managers like M9, M11, M12 and M13 revealed the overall concern with such time-constrained operations:

*People talk about parachuters: initiatives parachute into the area for short-term and then they are parachuting back up (M10).*

*There seems to be a lack of consistent approach tackling the problems. Very often projects are set up for a period of two to three years when they do good work. And then funding stops and projects close down. They helped some people but intergenerational poverty means people need long-term support to make long lasting changes to their lives. So it is no good having a project last a couple of years (M11).*

*The disadvantage in the area has been there for 40 years and the initiative is only over a year old so it only scratches the surface (M12).*

Other managers too pinpointed this short-termism as the link between the area's long standing issues and the council not being prepared to work in a more productive way:

*Unfortunately the council does not have time. They have very short-term scales. Their timescale isn't realistic. That puts people off. Community development takes a long time, if you want to do it properly, if you want a lasting effect it takes a long time. You can't do it in a quick fix basis. It doesn't happen overnight. The council do get disappointed because they want to see the results and outcomes. It takes time and results sometime show up in different places but the council don't know it. If you listen what people are*

*saying and actually listen then it works. That's how it is but people like to try to reinvent the wheel and try something else and try a new model. As I work if you start with people and the issues important to them you can't go wrong. The council start from the opposite end: 'here is where we want to be'... it doesn't work. It leads to frustration on both sides (M13).*

*There needs to be long focused plans and not short-term solutions to things. I don't know if it is the money thing or that's the way it is done. Everything is a quick fix, short-term solution. Nothing thought out properly. There needs to be people get involved properly consulting people on how to do it, how to resolve it. Instead of 'yeah that's a great idea in theory' but when you put that into practice it won't work. The council must be recognising this but maybe not if they just look at the statistics and think 'oh, it is not too bad' whereas that's not the reality. But it is a vicious circle as them putting pressure on themselves to get these outcomes (M9).*

Managers seemed aware of the current financial difficulties the council and the public domain were having in general. Yet they argued that deprived areas needed more investment in order to be able to make inhabitants more self-sufficient. Numerous managers further observed that without this direct investment, in order to reach and involve citizens via programmes, training and engagement, a change was unlikely to happen. In the light of the recent public service cuts, it appeared crucial to find alternative ways for people not to be overly dependent on the public sector, as demand was often not met due to the gap in funding. Community education services were perceived as just such a way.

Under the current financial constraints, managers did not consider sustainable positive change for the area as a whole to be possible, due to the extreme and complex needs these services were dealing with, at a time when demand for the services was ever growing. As managers reasoned, this essentially meant that their resources were stretched even further. Locals too were somewhat aware of the climate in which public services operated and that cuts were imposed on services and on the council as a whole.

Members of the Scottish Parliament and councillors admitted to service user dissatisfaction within the deprived parts of the ward. However they stated that locals always complained about their services. Some of them blamed locals' lack of knowledge for such dissatisfaction. A politician's (P2) quote reflected on this matter:

*A small number of people actually go to those local [CC, NP] meetings, so most of the people don't have a direct contact with the council. ... There is not necessarily an understanding or clear knowledge of how it works or what particularly are the pressures on council budget (P2).*

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the data from the interviews, beginning with what stakeholders said about the ward and its relationship with the local authority. The relationship between the ward and the council was found to be lacking in trust and 'top-down' and the two had different priorities. Local representation bodies such as the CCs and the NP, as current methods for engagement, were described as non-influential and unable to achieve the changes needed for the area. They were seen as bureaucratic and as not representing the needs and characteristics of the ward. While some changes were reported within the area, those were seen as mostly focused on improving buildings, the physical capital, rather than people's lives, the social capital.

In the more affluent parts of the ward educational standards were high and people had a strong sense of self-worth. In contrast, in the deprived areas of the ward many had a 'poverty of ambition'. To help address this, the importance of local services delivering community education was frequently recognised by interviewees. As community education has an enabling, empowering role, residents saw it as key to achieving a longed for sustainable change in the lives of many. Better engaged, informed and educated citizens would lead to progress in the community and the area. Therefore the provision of lasting skills for locals would reduce the need for further help and thus make fundamental as well as permanent, positive, changes in self-reliance. This required longer term commitment and funds which were still absent.

The remainder of the chapter focused on performance measurement and the role it played in local community education services. Managers delivering these services raised their worries about often being so performance focused ("what gets measured

gets done”) that the user and his/her needs got lost in the process. Focusing on quantitative service aspects that were easily measurable was still a common problem. Those were used rather than qualitative methods that were more appropriate for community education services which are subjective and not easily quantifiable.

The findings also showed that managers are mostly not being involved in setting out the direction of their service as that was done by funders and or senior management. This created a gap as local managers’ expertise and knowledge were not being used for the improvement of services. Pre-set targets from above was just one example that made them feel less in control in their management roles. Local residents also wished the sector to be less predetermined by the rigidity of meeting performance targets, which they frequently called a ‘tick box exercise’.

Users explained that they relied on services. The use of local services especially in the deprived areas therefore did not necessarily mean that residents were satisfied with those services, rather that they felt they had no other choice. However all stakeholders appreciated that there was a need for accountability and thus performance measurement was intended to aid service quality and review service delivery and its success.

In the field of community education, funding for programmes was frequently secured only for very short periods. Some services had operated for decades with short term funding. This limited the service’s ability to plan ahead and maximise its impact, and restricted the number of people it could reach. Funding uncertainties also caused unease amongst management. Managers were aware of and admitted to taking part in ‘gaming’ at times in order to please funders, and secure continued funding to deliver services. The ongoing funding cuts to services had negatively impacted on local community education services in the ward. This caused worry among stakeholders as to the future prospects for the area. They called for a change to better service provision, one that is more customer centred, providing value for money quality services.

The next chapter discusses the data from the primary research in light of the literature review.



## **Chapter Eight – Discussion**

## **Chapter Eight – Discussion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to investigate performance measurement of community education services at Scottish local government level, in Forth Ward, Edinburgh. The previous chapter revealed the findings of the research based on in-depth individual interviews with the stakeholders of the ward. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the analysis of those interviews combined with the secondary research in the form of the literature that was studied in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

The qualitative data collection method allows for the identification of common themes arising from the analysis of interview data. The literature provides not only a context for the results but permits comparison of the secondary and primary researches. The findings that emerged from the primary research will now be discussed in light of the literature in order to address the objectives of this study. The findings can be grouped under three themes: governance and relationships, community education and performance measurement.

The chapter begins by setting out, in summary form, all the key findings. The first part of the discussion then primarily focuses on governance and relationships in the ward. The second part discusses community education, the ways in which it is delivered and its importance for the ward. Community education is identified as a key aspect that could improve the ward, particularly its deprived areas. The final part of the chapter centres on the topic of performance measurement within the ward.

#### **8.1.2 Key findings**

The key findings are summarised in Table 8.1.

**Table 8.1: Summary of key findings**

<b>Governance and relationships:</b>
1. A perceived distrust prevails between the council and ward that creates an environment in which working together is difficult.
2. In spite of money going into poorer areas, ward stakeholders report only slight improvements in social capital.
3. Decision-making is mainly top-down in nature and there is a sense of disconnect between local people and the authorities.
4. Local people and the council have conflicting priorities.
5. The community representation bodies within the ward (CCs and NP) are not viewed as influential enough to make changes in accordance with the wishes of the locals. There is often confusion surrounding their structures.
<b>Community education:</b>
6. An identified need is outlined for a holistic overview of the area and the underlying issues in the poorer parts of the ward. One problem is seemingly the segregation of personal matters/complex issues instead of dealing with them together.
7. Ways need to be found to truly take into account the views of locals. This could be for example via partnership work between the council and residents and through involving local managers.
8. Community education is viewed as being one of the keys to easing public service dependence and to help services achieve more through having more self-reliant citizens.
<b>Performance measurement:</b>
9. The often unmeasurable nature of public services is said to lead to some difficulties in managing them. At times the customer is lost sight of within the process of measuring and meeting targets.

<p>10. Despite the focus on performance measurement improvement in services is not necessarily achieved. Predetermined targets or outcomes are given from the top to managers which are often viewed as not fit for the service and the needs of users. Gaming is admitted to occur within service operations: reporting in a way that satisfies the funders and ensures continuity of service.</p> <p>There is a potential divergence between what public services aim to deliver and what actually gets delivered.</p>
<p>11. Residents seemingly have little knowledge about performance. In wealthier parts, locals appear generally complacent about services although they do not frequently use them, while in poorer parts people feel reliant on the provided services. This apparently creates an environment in which locals tend not to judge services.</p>
<p>12. Managers identify that the problems with performance measurability mainly centre on time and resource constraints, over-reliance on targets and indicators, the type of data collected, an over-emphasis on results and increased bureaucracy.</p>
<p>13. There is a call for more autonomy and change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Measuring involves increased paperwork that often prevents managers from actively taking part in delivering the service to users.</li> <li>- The lack of management flexibility seemingly restricts managers being able to manage.</li> <li>- According to managers, measuring can impact negatively on customer needs and manager motivation.</li> </ul>
<p>14. Need is recognised for long-term planning and improvements in deprived areas.</p> <p>Short initiatives, while fruitful, cannot bring lasting change to the area.</p> <p>Open discussion between local managers and higher management/funders would help shape improved services that are more reflective of local needs.</p>

## **8.2 Governance and relationships**

This part of the discussion supports objective one of the research by exploring how public service delivery takes place within the ward. Objective two was fulfilled by the literature review. That is compared here against the stakeholders' perceptions (fulfilling objective three). Objective four is addressed throughout this chapter though more specifically in the third part of it that explicitly looks into performance measurement at ward level community education services.

### **8.2.1 The ward and local government**

Much discussion in public services literature refers to the prominence of local government since it is at this level that the nation experiences in their own locality both public services and ultimately the government of their country (Monies 1996; Smart 1997; Lipsky 2010). The effectiveness of public services in responding to complex societal problems has led governments to view and apply public services as a solution to many issues. As public services impact on citizens' lives (McConnell 2004; Simmons *et al.* 2009) they carry great responsibility.

The position of public services in local people's lives is reinforced by ward residents talking approvingly about the general existence of them. Some within the ward observed public services as one of the greatest developments of the last century (see section 7.3.1, p.145). This appreciation resonated with the secondary research (Black 2000; McConnell 2004; Simmons *et al.* 2009; 2020 Public Service Trust 2010; Scottish Government 2011a) in Chapters Two and Three.

That “[w]e live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need” and that “[o]ur public services are high quality, continually improving and efficient and responsive to local people's needs” are two of the strategic objectives set out in the National Performance Framework (NPF)

(Scottish Government 2007a, 2016) (see Appendix Three, p.296). Residents in the deprived parts of the ward do not feel the impact in their everyday experiences (see section 7.2.2, p.136). While locals approve of the concept of public service provision, they feel that service delivery needs to be more effectively managed for long-term results, outcomes. Such a view coupled with the literature (2020 Public Services Trust 2010; Besemer and Bramley 2012) affirms that it is positive outcomes that residents primarily expect from service delivery.

The above views are consistent with the principles of the Scottish Government that anticipate local government actions mirroring the NPF and striving to meet the proposed and agreed positive outcomes (Campbell 2012). Such an outcome focus manifests itself at ward level in that residents wish to see more improvements, especially in the lives of vulnerable people. Residents reason that this would result in more aspirational citizens through creating better living conditions for the community as a whole (see section 7.3.1, p.145).

These expectations of local public services put extra pressure on local managers who are familiar with the wishes of the users and the wider area. This conforms to one of the points identified in Table 4.3 (p.80) as a potential implication of developments in public management. At ward level, management roles involve great pressure because of being accountable to the council and often to other funders and also to residents who might have opposing views at times. This will be further discussed in section 8.4.5.1.

The important role of both local and central government as organiser or as a parent (advocating a parental, enabler relationship), with the ability to overview current issues affecting the local people from a broad political standpoint, has been frequently identified within local public management (Smart 1997; Gramberg and Teicher 2000; McConnell 2004; Popkin *et al.* 2009; Hastings *et al.* 2012). Primary data which reinforces this viewpoint is expressed within the findings of this study.

Commonly residents think of all public service delivery in the ward as coming from and being financially provided by the council. Likewise it is the council they hold responsible for services. There is a general expectation that the council will look

after the area, since local people feel that the power to do this is firmly in the council's hands rather than in theirs (see section 7.2.1, p.131). Despite this perception as provider, the negative feelings that emerge towards the local authority have been broadly outlined in section 7.2.1. These opinions are based on locals' commonly held views that the social capital and circumstances which deprived areas endure have not significantly changed over the years despite the council's presence within the locality in the form of many initiatives. The council is blamed for this failure which locals suspect could be solved if there was interaction between the area and the council and their views were appreciated and taken into account at the time decisions were made.

While the findings reveal that there is a clearer awareness amongst services of the need to show results, the changes that residents wish to see are described as complex by service managers. They assert that in order to raise the self-reliance of the area, educating local people in deprived settings is vital but both resource-intensive and time-consuming. They agree that it is through the power of community education that the area can prosper. Such a finding brings with it the suggestion that further attention is needed in this area of service provision, especially for longer-term planning. This is in order to ensure the continuity and stability of community education practices delivered in a way that is more reactive and sensitive to the locality's long standing needs. The secondary data collection supports the prominence of community education practices which work towards having self-reliant citizens (Somerville 2011; Ledwith 2011).

The consequence of perceived stagnation over the years is present in the fragile relationship between the council and the ward. Despite what the literature articulates as the ultimate aim of all public service reform, namely to improve the lives of the nation (Simmons *et al.* 2009; Burton 2013; Miller and McTavish 2014), the findings have shown (in section 7.2.2, p.136) that the ward doubts whether the council's objectives have their own priorities at heart. This creates difficulties in coordinating the complexities of management. From the point of view of the ward, most locals indicate, based on their own experience and interaction with the council, that the council has proved to residents over the years that it is not sufficiently expert in

guiding the area out of social deprivation by reversing the low social and economic status of residents and their poor levels of education. Arguably, residents see improving the area and the lives of its residents as council responsibilities. Despite having various education related initiatives that work on improving people's lives in the ward, most participants are unaware of them. Programmes run by local libraries, community centres and similar other establishments within the ward often report that they struggle to get the attention of those who could benefit most from their classes. Reaching out further to the community and better publicity of these services are essential in order for residents to take full advantage of the specific programmes available.

A sense of disbelief that the council is doing its job properly prevails within the whole area. This negativity towards the council as an institution is proving to be a challenge for the local authority (both council officials and council members) to overcome. This had sufficient import in the primary research as to merit it becoming a key finding (see Table 8.1 (p.201)). The assumption amongst participants that the council has failed to do a good job over the years has reportedly created resistance amongst the people of the ward even in the more affluent areas, as the interviews revealed. Participants evidenced such accusations by referring to well publicised city-wide scandals and the closures of local public organisations (i.e. a primary school, a local newspaper) which the council could not prevent from happening. These situations seemingly alienated residents and seemed to confirm their perception that the council did not work for them. Therefore, for these locals, the operation of the council could not reflect customer-centredness as advocated by NPM and post-NPM philosophies (see Chapter Three).

The reported negativity surrounding the relationship between the ward and the council needs addressing given that it appears to be a barrier for partnership working between the locality and the council. This negativity was not thought to serve the common interest of the ward as it prevents the ward from achieving its full potential. If however this was overcome, with both parties working more closely with one another based on mutual trust, it could lead to the betterment of the ward with improved area representation and more specific need recognition. One way of



overcoming the current lack of trust, which was suggested by participants from all stakeholder groups, is by honest talks between the authority and residents. While this is partly the role of Community Councils (CCs) (Forth NP Community Councils no date; Scottish Government 2012a; Community Councils 2013), trust in that type of body is generally low amongst locals who commonly perceive such community representation powerless. This is mainly based on their unawareness of any changes that a CC has managed to accomplish. In order to ensure locals participated they would need to feel listened to and that they would be part of decisions that would influence their locality. This would be seen as putting residents first rather than making decisions that at times do not reflect what is important for citizens. While locals admit that the council holds discussions in important matters, both managers and residents question the genuineness of such policy-making consultations as they perceive those as serving to reinforce the council's practices rather than the area's views (see section 7.4.3, p.162).

The perception that the ward is not influential over matters impacting on its life is identified as a key issue, particularly by participants residing within the least affluent part of Forth. Fewer participants however have a deeper understanding of why this is. The ward's individual characteristics, such as intergenerational deprivation, have made some parts of the ward ill-famed for decades, and participants reason that this very deprivation is why a way to eradicate such longstanding problems successfully is yet to be found. They point to the top-down nature of public service provision as one of the main obstacles to finding a solution. By top-down, they mean that the local authority is in power and while involvement is offered to locals to be part of decision-making, residents and managers perceive that they have little power to influence. Such a situation is in contrast with the philosophies of NPM and post-NPM as outlined in Chapter Three. These highlighted the benefits and importance of the public sector involving users and citizens as well as granting more power to managers in order to improve services.

The perception is dominant despite the formation of the Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) that is the council's strategy for better inclusion and ward representation. (See further in section 8.2.2, p.210.) As discussed in Chapter Two, the aim of the Scottish

Government as well as the local government is citizen involvement in decisions for improved local outcomes. However in this ward, locals and managers feel less involved and influential. This conflicts with the idea that such a body emphasises the heightened importance of community and social inclusion as outlined in Chapter Two by many (e.g. Department for Social Development 2003; Forth NP 2011, 2012, 2015; Ellison *et al.* 2012).

There is evidence in the collected data to suggest that for a feeling of connectedness with local representatives and politicians, their physical presence in the neighbourhood, and visibility and approachability, are still important influences for local people. Residents report low trust in public figures (local councillors, MPs and MSPs) within the deprived parts as most residents regard them as disconnected from the area. Their view is that representatives are not visible and many residents admit to not knowing where and how to find representatives. In contrast, service managers see most local councillors as being active in the area with their surgeries often taking place in such local organisations' premises.

Despite the presence of information on the availability of councillors being displayed in different venues in the ward many do not go into such places thus do not benefit from such a form of representation. Therefore, further investigation is needed to look into ways in which to connect the residents with their representatives. Many of these residents do not use a computer or social media frequently hence other methods are needed. Duffy (2000), Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), 2020 Public Services Trust (2010), Bovaird (2011) and Shildrick *et al.* (2012) also highlight the need for increased citizen participation and awareness of their local public services. Both NPM and NPG (in Chapter Three) set out citizen involvement as a priority in order to put them in charge as active stakeholders of public services (Painter 2012). In the more affluent areas of Forth, if any residents are in doubt about the availability of the person they wish to speak to, they find out via a phone call or email whereas such empowerment is found to be often missing from residents in the other areas of the ward.

Previously the poorer areas were vocal and fought for their rights (NESHG 2011), but currently there is a sense of apathy and the belief that 'things would not change'.

This is argued to be one of the main barriers keeping most residents from being active, apart from a handful of mainly elderly people. There is a contrast here between residents' views and how in theory NPM and NPG policies emphasise listening to the customers as stakeholders of services (Bovaird and Loffler 2003; Eliassen and Sitter 2008). Despite the council opening up to more customer-focused ways of operating, in the ward people would like to see a more satisfying level of service for the area aligned with the residents' common needs. Yet the council is recognised to be in a difficult situation with funding cuts imposed upon it and increased demands for its services. This matter is discussed in more detail in section 8.5 (p.235).

From the interviews it emerges that a misconception exists in the distinct parts of the ward. Despite the demographic, social and economic differences between Trinity and the rest of the ward (Pilton and Granton), the differing areas believe that the other part gets the attention of the council (i.e. Trinity assumes that Pilton and Granton is being looked after better, while Pilton and Granton notes that Trinity is). These views have been confirmed in the sense that although each area sees the council as delivering services, neither part perceives that the council shows particular interest in them. There is evidence in the data that the council is targeting inequality in deprived areas of the ward and strives for equity. There are investments in deprived areas, for example in the form of regeneration projects and community education programmes. Their reception not only by locals but also by public service managers is mixed. They welcome money being spent on the ward but feel that more investment as well as a better use of resources would yield improved, longer term, sustainable results.

A further discovery of the primary research is a perception shared amongst residents, managers, and local councillors that there are conflicting priorities between the ward and the local authority. Stakeholders argue that such differences have been ongoing for generations therefore it is not a byproduct of the current economic downturn, although funding cuts have exacerbated need and demand. This claim is consistent with the publications on Scotland as well as Edinburgh's trends (by CEC 2010a; CEC 2011b; Christie 2011; CEC 2012a; Hodgkinson 2012) in relation to the Scottish

public service cuts (see sections 3.4.1 and for further discussion on cuts 8.5). These all highlight the difficulty the sector is still to face with long-term budget cuts.

Regardless of where they live within the ward (affluent or deprived parts), residents perceive faults in the way the council delivers on what is important to them. While residents feel that they receive basic everyday services that are satisfactory, they expect more intervention and clearer guidance for area development and prosperity, which is one of their main concerns. A prevailing perception is that the council has failed to address specific issues particularly in the deprived parts of the ward. This perceived sense of discontent of both (the wealthy and deprived) areas' residents is concerning for the future of the ward and the direction of the local authority. Similar results are found also by Audit Scotland (2013b) on the feelings of citizens towards their local authority. It is proposed by participants that making known the agenda and outcomes of consultations more widely, for example by displaying these on notice boards at central locations, could help spread information. Residents reasoned that if they are hardly aware of the work of the council how would more vulnerable people know where to turn in need. That is why council communication was seen important. Displaying the issues raised and the basis on which actions were taken would not only inform residents on the work and responsibilities of the council but also demonstrate the degree to which their local voices played a part in the decision. Moreover the language to be used in these meetings and communications needs to be less bureaucratic and more comprehensible for the community. Problems surrounding the use of bureaucratic language have been raised by many authors like Shuy (1998), Lynch and Cruise (2006), and Scott (2007).

### **8.2.2 Community Councils and the Neighbourhood Partnership**

The low level of community involvement which is commonly found in Forth Ward also extends to the local forms of community representation such as Community Councils (CCs) and the Neighbourhood Partnership (NP). These have been created with the aim of bringing management closer to people and including more of them in

local decision-making (Scottish Government 2012a; CEC 2014; CEC 2015b). Many consider these to be productive methods for making changes (McConnell 2004; The Edinburgh Partnership 2011; Scottish Government 2012a; Forth NP 2015) as stated in Chapter Two. However participants reveal that such bodies apparently lack effectiveness within the ward as they do not have substantial funds or powers at their disposal (see section 7.2.3, p.139). As people do not understand them they are unpopular. Not being perceived as influential also acts as a limitation to people getting involved.

Residents appear not to perceive positive changes brought about by CCs and the NP, hence they question their purpose. In terms of participation, interviewees from all stakeholder groups feel that some of the long standing members are there for their own self-interest rather than for the common good. Consequently, these bodies need further studying and reshaping to truly make them work with and for the local people. First they need to appeal to locals in order for them to feel it is worthwhile investing their time and efforts. These suggestions are often in contrast with the principles (as discussed in Chapter Three) such as localism (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010; Matthews 2012), and bringing services and their decision-making closer to their local users (Scottish Government 2012a; Mackie 2013). The majority of locals reported on not feeling involved or having powers to influence local decisions.

Findings from this study do not fully support the City of Edinburgh Council's Pledge 33 (CEC 2015b) (see section 2.5, p.23) to support Neighbourhood Partnerships and include local people in decisions concerning council resources. However the council also admits to the need to strengthen NPs. Based on the findings of the research the NP is at present viewed as delivering mostly the decisions made at the top rather than the emerging needs of locals. Further research is needed to understand how the NP could make decisions in a way that ensures people are listened to and served.

The primary research also brings to attention the debate about local government size. Managers find the local authority area to be rather big compared to many small countries in Europe which have much smaller municipalities with only a couple of thousand local people. This has been argued as being a possibility for Scotland in the

future in order to tighten its public service provision and make it more local. Managers argued that even Forth Ward covers an area with a population over 30,000 which they perceived to be quite large. Thus in this study, support is found for McConnell (2004); McHugh (2006); Atkinson *et al.* (2010); and Christie (2011) (see section 2.3) who suggest that local government size may indeed be inappropriate for efficient and effective people-centred provision.

### **8.3 Community education and the need for empowerment**

This part of the chapter notes the arguments for community education and what it means to the life of the area. During the primary research, the importance has emerged of educating residents in the deprived areas of the ward in order to empower them. Community education contributes to people's quality of life by their service provision of information, learning and support as outlined in section 2.5 (p.23). A link between community education and empowerment and local government performance at the ward level is notable in that deprivation is often viewed as a burden on local services' performance. This is because social problems require extra resources from public services to reduce social exclusion (Murray 2001; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005; Ly 2010). Social problems have been acknowledged to be long standing in the life of the ward. While these local problems have been recognised and addressed in the form of programmes and services in the ward, they have not been sorted successfully to date. Managers of local services united with service users in finding that the area would improve along with its services and their performance if citizens were more self-reliant rather than overly dependent on the public domain (see section 7.3.1, p.145). They view this to be realistically achievable through community education practices.

The research shows that the needs of users are complex. One of the underpinning factors that causes this complexity is the diversity of local residents. Another is that knowledge about local public services and their performance is also varied amongst participants. It is suggested in Chapter Three that people in deprived areas show a

lower degree of understanding of public service provision (Duffy 2000). This can be seen when considering the findings concerning the need for community education. Less educational attainment is linked to a reliance on public services particularly those that provide community education services. Conforming to the literature, this finding supports the theory that Matthews and Besemer (2014) and CEC (2015a) disclose that in order to tackle inequality, active, empowered residents are essential. Further backing and engagement is required from the local authority and its partners providing such services. These need to reach out to more locals over a longer period of time to allow for achieving long-term outcomes. Nabatchi (2010) links citizen participation (and views it as a building block of democracy) with contributing to building communities, something that both the Scottish Government and local government advocate (as revealed in section 4.7.1). Involving citizens in the public decision-making process is also expected from the government (2020 Public Services Trust 2010; Bovaird 2011).

There is indication of a need to take a whole ward, holistic, approach that identifies the underlying issues of the complex needs within the area and works towards eradicating them with the aid of the many community education services present within the locality. The key findings of the research (see Table 8.1, p.201) reveal the lack of such an approach. Community education service managers report on the segregation of the complex issues rather than them being dealt with in a comprehensive way. What it means is that a complex matter is broken up into smaller pieces which will be allocated separately to and seen by many different kinds of public services. Altogether the complex underlying issues will neither get dealt with nor eradicated. Managers see this matter as a vulnerability within operations as in their experience the people affected by the complex issues will be reliant again on the same services, as the causes of their needs will not have been addressed.

The council is expected to learn to co-operate with the citizens of the ward when delivering their local services and planning for the future of the area. Therefore, partnership working, not only amongst public organisations but with locals, is found to be increasingly important, confirming similar findings that Dawe (CEC 2011d), Christie (2011) and the Scottish Government (2014b) identified. Moreover

collaboration is a hallmark of NPM and NPG (see Table 4.3 (p.80)) and the Four Pillars (in Appendix Three). In reality there is further scope for it. While recognition of the importance of this is undeniable and partnership working is represented partly in the form of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), present in the ward as the Forth NP, locals do not perceive such partnership truly working for and with them (see section 7.2.2, p.136). Hence they call for a more open dialogue and cooperation between authorities and residents.

At the local authority level Dawe (CEC 2011d) warned in 2011 that there was a need for the council to be more open to and approachable for residents but according to the findings of this research such a development is still not fully evident at the ward level. Managers reason that regardless of trying to embed different models and theories, not putting locals' perspectives at the heart of the planning process commonly sets the council up for failure because of the failure to listen to the residents. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tension that Scott (2007) articulates between the requirements of local authorities as providers of services and the wishes of citizens as consumers is still apparent.

The awareness of a requirement to improve the social fabric of the ward (as distinct from focusing mainly on the environmental factors) is one of the developing arguments of the interviews amongst stakeholders. Similar to managers, in terms of their views, locals are convinced – and thus follow the thinking of Nabatchi (2010) – that developing a shared community spirit, and investment into the area paired with an instilment of pride in taking control of their locality and families, would assist the achievement of greater results. Such an outcome would affect not only the prosperity of the area, it would also have a positive impact on local public service provision and performance. This is in line with what Neil (2011) perceives as one of the main focuses of the Scottish Government – to deliver sustainable changes to deprived areas.

However in the deprived areas of Forth, regeneration is not perceived to be a significant agent of change as it only changes the environmental aspect rather than the social fabric of the area. The joint view of managers and residents is that regeneration does not tackle the underlying issues of deprivation. The reason given



for this is that regeneration primarily focuses on erecting new buildings and moving the same people with complex needs into them. Participants make the point that, until the social fabric is taken care of, the investments through physical regeneration often suffer, for example in the form of getting vandalised. Therefore, many believe that if the people of the deprived communities are better informed, engaged and educated thus developing the social capital and if community education services are endorsed within the locality, the area would prosper. Such arguments reinforce the views held by many like Ward (2008), Ledwith (2011) and Nogues (2013).

Whilst there is a degree of awareness of some initiatives already provided, residents cannot address their own personal as well as these initiatives' effectiveness in leading the area towards a well needed – as they state – sustainable change. They do not have the tools (of confidence and competence) at their disposal, they are, broadly speaking, too taken up with their own issues, and moreover, are not convinced they would have the influence to be effective. Successful community education services could change that by producing more self-reliant citizens. Not only would they be able to play more of a role in influencing the direction of the area, being more self-reliant would reduce the need for some public services and would save money for local government.

In deprived areas services are at times found to be poorer quality. This resonates with the secondary research findings about the factors which contribute to unending deprivations made known by many like Dean and Hastings (2000), Murray (2001), Cabinet Office (2005) and Hastings *et al.* (2012) who blame inadequate public support services in disadvantaged areas. Finding the validity of such a statement still applicable, currently, managers allude to the deficits of their local public services which they believe would not be accepted in wealthier areas of the city. Their statement is supported by the evidence they provided on waiting times and length and depth of the service which an individual in the locality is likely to receive. Such an outline clarifies the different service provisions within different areas as some managers explain the characteristics of middle class citizens that the literature also describes (see under section 4.4.4, p.67). As reported by Hastings and Matthews

(2011) middle class citizens have influence on policies and service practice within their localities.

#### **8.4 Performance measurement – theory in practice**

The purpose of performance measurement within the public domain is the delivery of improved, quality services. As public services aim to enhance the lives of the nation, performance measurement tracks and reveals the progress of those services. Such process can be influential for the future direction of the ward. This part of the chapter discusses the practice of performance measurement in community education services of the ward.

##### **8.4.1 Overview**

Despite the fact that methods and disciplines associated with the private domain are firmly established within the public service environment, many still question their worth. As Chapter Three describes, the merit of lifting private sector methods and embedding them into the public service environment has been debated for a long time with many coming to the conclusion that since the two sectors are extremely different, their methods should not and could not be interchanged (Ranson and Stewart 1994; Horton and Farnham 2002; Gianakis 2002; Denhardt and Denhardt 2007). Managers of the ward find the process of measuring outcomes often very challenging particularly in their specific field of providing community education services which is renowned for being subjective and thus does not easily lend itself to measurement. They acknowledge that such subjectivity is one of the factors that differentiate the public from the private sector. Local managers recognise that the public domain often has unmeasurable and more varied goals and performance than the private sector, which ties back to what has been broadly reported within the

public management literature by many authors like Flynn (2007), Ferlie *et al.* (2007), Eliassen and Sitter (2008), Fryer *et al.* (2009). Interviews testify that the management tools taken from the private sector, that are often rigid and not able to track unmeasurable, subjective aspects of a service, have resulted in problems of measuring performance, quality and effectiveness and as a whole have led to some difficulties in managing public services (Stern 2007; Christensen and Laegreid 2011).

The importance of measuring performance presents itself as a key concern for managers, following the contributions of Eden and Hyndman (1999) and Robinson (2012). A coping measure amongst managers that emerges from the research, in response to difficulties with measurement, is evidencing in a way that satisfies the funder or higher management. The purpose of this is not only to please the funders but also to ensure the continuity of funds to provide stability for their services. Gaming is described by managers as being necessary at times (despite managers' unwillingness to engage in such activity), but it is also disclosed that gaming causes problems as it masks the reality of the service. This is similar to Dicker (2010) and Broeckling's (2010) views. The research highlights that customer needs can be lost sight of in the midst of measuring. This supports the premise that neglecting the needs of customers in order to fulfil the designated targets does occur, confirming that Scott's (2007) research findings (in section 4.2) are still valid. Such notions are found to cause a divergence between the ambitious outcomes that public services aim to deliver and what is actually being delivered.

Managers feel limited by measures which, if they do not allow for a focus on the users, inevitably have a negative effect and a consequence for the users, as well as hindering managers' motivation. For that reason research into this kind of issue is required since their personal drive to help others is a shared aim of these managers in deciding to work in public services. This problem is reflected in Diamond and Liddle's (2013) view in Chapter Four. Managers report that their desire to help others is being constrained by the emphasis on measurement over customer-centredness. This supports what the literature concludes about the negative aspects of measuring in Chapter Four. With more and more restrictions in place that

significantly reduce their personal input, managers often complain of being helpless and caught in the middle between the local authority that imposes the measures and the service users whom they get to know well over the years. This is similar to what Moore (1995); Blamey and Mackenzie (2007) and Lipsky (2010) express. Therefore, the findings suggest that performance is a factor that needs to be considered by all the organisations in the ward as it will be unique to each of them.

Chapter Four described the high incidence of performance problems within the public domain, such as measurability issues, time and resource constraints, and problems with focusing overly on targets and indicators. However the level of support available to managers was found to significantly reduce problems with performance measurement. Therefore, communication and joined-up decision-making with the involvement of local managers are identified as requirements for better public service provision. Such a finding reemphasises what Moore (1995), Kapucu (2006) and Scott (2007) describe as a horizontally working policy community rather than a top-down one. Although some managers reveal that such horizontal work has gradually been happening, there is a further need to instil and deepen such a working culture. As suggested in Chapter Three, this support may help managers overcome problems such as the increased focus on results and objectives, and the competing values and goals of the service. Despite performance systems already including the service's main tasks, these findings suggest that more detailed descriptions are needed in order to fine-tune the system. For this more input needs to come from the service manager. Autonomy is found to be an issue amongst local service managers, many of them calling for the need for greater freedom to be granted to them. They wish to be allowed to be more in charge of their services.

Much discussion in the performance measurement literature alludes to the fact that output measurement must evolve as a result of the influence of NPM policies, in comparison with the use of input measurement in TPA (Hood 1991; Pollitt 2003; Radnor and Barnes 2007). NPG has been emphasising the importance of outcomes (see Table 4.3, p.80). While admittedly focusing on outcomes is gradually spreading, managers report that services are still preoccupied with input measurement, focusing predominantly on the short-term.

The overall deficits within the sector manifest themselves in an undeniable desire for change in public service operations amongst managers and even the policymaking community. Such a strong feeling is further reinforced among local managers by the level of perceived suppression from top level management. According to local managers they often have little experience of customer service or performance yet they overpower the local management by imposing their ideas. A need for change in the sector is also recognised within the public service literature as advocated by Christie (2011) and McLaren (2013). Table 4.2 (p.79) shows the findings and recommendations of Christie (2011) tailored and made applicable to Forth Ward and its level of service provision. Yet the findings of the primary research disclose that while there have been some gradual changes (e.g. the introduction of working together at ward level via the Neighbourhood Partnership (NP)), a number of aspects that Christie (2011) outlined (e.g. getting away from the top-down nature of service provision, better community inclusion, the importance of prevention to reduce needs and inequality) are still somewhat contradictory within the ward level and so further changes still need to be made.

From the residents' perspective their lack of knowledge emerged on the topic of performance (see section 7.4.3, p.162). While in Trinity residents reason that their lack of deeper knowledge is due to them being generally complacent with their public services provided, in the deprived parts of the ward residents often do not contemplate on the services provided to them because they feel reliant on them. This resonates with what the literature finds on citizens' limited knowledge about service issues (2020 Public Services Trust 2010). Lack of knowledge is also linked to deprived areas. As the literature notes, the people living in these areas often have little educational background (Weiss 1998; Duffy 2000; 2020 Public Services Trust 2010). The result of their lack of awareness as earlier outlined can be passive and disengaged citizens. Inclusion and empowerment are seen to be key solutions in order to promote an informed, self-sustaining nation that is capable of looking after itself. This is especially so at times when public service funds are scarce and stretched to the limit and thus the sector is incapable of providing as much for its citizens as previously.

### 8.4.2 Targets

Target setting is recognised as an important part of service provision. Managers believe that targets do determine a sense of direction for the service, empowering them and letting them feel in control. This is in line with the literature, in which many like Mackie (2008) and Dicker (2010) accept that targets provide focus and control for public organisations. Managers state that at times the direction that targets determine contradicts the emerging needs of locals. Therefore managers wish to achieve more autonomy to set their targets or at least to have more of a voice in the process. The research identifies that very often managers are provided with predetermined targets and outcomes they need to achieve. Following those appeared to dominate. There are some managers who find targets negotiable to a degree and so mostly achievable, even if largely set by a higher managerial level and imposed on them and their service. Others describe that deciding whether to follow those predetermined targets (and ignore the emerging needs of users) or base the service on the local individual service users' needs (which often are quite complex) can pose a dilemma. Although their field creates valuable services, numerous managers felt that they were not involved in setting out the direction of their services. The prevailing perception amongst managers is that their general role of managing at this micro-level of the ward often seems undermined, which feels as if it prevents them from creating public value.

The importance of managers creating public value and better outcomes is recognised by Moore (1995) and others like Seddon (2008), Nabatchi (2010), and Meynhardt and Bartholomes (2011) (see Chapter Four). In light of this, managers support the concept that they should be allowed more input within their service operation owing to their experiences and knowledge of local issues and users. Thus they should be free (within general boundaries) to manage and react to needs. Such a finding is significant because despite the philosophy of decentralisation that NPM and NPG advocate (as discussed in Chapter Three and also in Table 4.3 (p.80)) the influence of decentralisation is not always felt in ward level public service management.

The findings from the interviews show that targets are only guidance and should not be the sole focus when considering performance and its effectiveness. Managers warned that targets are limited in the sense that they cannot capture every aspect, nor reveal underlying trends, issues and impacts which influence how or whether a target is met. Therefore, assigning too much meaning to them is a mistake made, managers mainly say, especially by higher levels of management removed from the day to day life of the area. If there is a disconnect between what senior managers associate with the given target and how local service managers see those targets, then the opportunities that target setting implies (e.g. clarity surrounding the service) are not being maximised. This confirms findings by Propper and Wilson (2003) and Adcroft and Willis (2005) who observe similar difficulties being experienced. Such a pattern both in theory and practice helps explain the arguments forming around the characteristics of targets, described in Chapter Four, where Lockett's (1992) model (Table 4.1, p.59) provides a clear indication of how to measure organisational aspects that then can form the basis for target setting. As managers argue at present it is usually the output part that targets engage with rather than the outcome. Figure 4.1, (p.64) provides an illustration of the performance process which shows that for longer term service planning outcome measurement is advised.

Most managers state that being subjected to predetermined targets, even before their programme or service has started, puts the emphasis only on meeting those aspects. Other aspects of the service that are not measured do not get much attention due to the pressure to meet the targets. This conforms to the literature in which many like Lester (2001), Atkinson *et al.* (2010) and Dicker (2010) refer to this phenomenon as 'what gets measured gets done' or 'targetology' (Gardner 1998). The explanations from the interviews show that such a lack of flexibility within their service operation leaves managers being restricted in their use of their skills and expertise which they describe as a serious threat. This is in contrast to the theory of having managers who are granted more flexibility and freedom in order to improve administrative capacity for efficient and effective public service performance (Hood 1991; Pollitt 2003; Kapucu 2006 and Ferlie *et al.* 2007) as Chapters Three and Four discussed.

‘What gets measured gets done’ is also perceived by managers to have significant consequences for the development of the area especially in relation to community education services. As noticed by managers, aspects that might be very important to the local people are not set as a target by the authorities higher up. An explanation for this is given by the managers’ hypothesis that what the people see as important is not viewed and set out as a priority for the council or the government to address at the time. Such an insight is noteworthy as it appears to suggest that the performance culture described in Chapter Four has basic faults within it: despite the awareness of local needs requiring attention, because they are not current priorities for the local authority they are not taken into account. Hence no matter how much the demand is for something in the locality, if that aspect is not included in the targets determined for the service, it will not be addressed. The shortfalls of targets echo the thoughts of Eden and Hyndman (1999), Thomas (2006), and Ammons (2010) which lead them to re-emphasise that the ultimate aim of a target is to increase improvement and the three Es. As shown in the research, this cannot be achieved if targets do not clearly and thoroughly reflect the local needs taking into account the unique aspects of the locality.

The findings shed new light on the type of targets being followed and their effectiveness as perceived by very long serving managers in the ward. The prevailing perception amongst them is that in practice following local authority principles and targets over long periods of time may have achieved some results, but has not completely led to the necessary changes to eliminate the complex issues of inequality within the locality. In light of this, managers think that a new approach is timely and important. This reinforces findings discussed previously (in section 8.2.1, p.203). They argue that targets need to come from within the area: locally recognised as well as meaningful targets that respond to the needs of the local residents. They consider that this will lead to long-term sustainable change rather than short-term developments. Such an argument is in line with the literature in which Gay (2005) reports on the increased interest in greater local determination of local priorities. The short-term nature of targets has also been highlighted and warned against in the Local Government and Regeneration Committee’s (2012) observations. Such a theme is supported by many in the literature like Talbot (2007); Seddon (2008);



Dicker (2010) affirms that targets only tend to focus on the short-term rather than the long-term. This questions their effectiveness given that the change which the public domain wishes to deliver into people's lives requires a long time span.

In describing the local users' point of view, this study has shown their scepticism about targets. The belief that the importance of meeting targets for local authorities is greater than the prominence of the actual service and its quality appeared to dominate their argument. Furthermore interviewees (in section 7.4.4.1.1, p.171) refer to box ticking exercises frequently being believed to be undertaken by their local services, a perception which is mirrored in the literature, for example by Seddon (2008) and Baines (2013) who also link 'box ticking' activity to the loss of service purpose by primarily aiming to meet targets. These perceptions seem to suggest that the opposite is being achieved to that for which targets were set out: providing better services. The views of service users are that part of the process is flawed and results are at times artificial in order to demonstrate that services are doing well. This displays a false reality. Such altering of results is perceived to be undertaken in order to meet the targets. This perception is in accordance with Ammons (2010) who finds that target-reporting for organisations has shallow merit at times and is often mainly used just to impress.

Locals question the overall value and authenticity of targets within the public sphere. Despite acknowledging their lack of a deeper understanding of performance processes and service operations, they argue against the whole point of the process if part of it does not reflect the reality. Such thinking leads to the proposition that changes they would like to see cannot always happen, partly because of this system that focuses on performance, as they perceive it, 'at all cost'. There is evidence to suggest that, for most participants, the emphasis should be on the quality of services offered rather than on meeting targets. Accordingly, they call for less of a focus on targets and more freedom for local managers to be able to focus on the value of the service they provide. The locals' statement seems not only to recognise but also to reinforce the same argument that managers have been making as outlined above. These validated arguments emerging from both local managers and local service users seem to indicate that there is need for further research into the effectiveness of

targets at local level within community education services. This could prove valuable for the local authority and partner organisations delivering community education services, to guide their future direction.

### **8.4.3 Performance indicators**

The interviews indicate that there is widespread realisation of the importance of well-set performance indicators amongst local managers in the ward, as these highlight areas of underperformance to managers. Such a finding is in harmony with the literature (McKevitt and Lawton 1994; Boyle 2000) as described in Chapter Four. It also seems that local managers agree with academics like Mackie (2008) on reducing the numbers of current performance indicators. However managers stress that most of these indicators are still quantitative in nature. According to service managers, this makes indicators inflexible and causes the qualitative aspects of a service to be often unrecorded. These problems, leading to the ineffectiveness of the indicators, are noted both in the managers' interviews and in the literature (Claytonsmith 2003; Local Government and Regeneration Committee 2012).

There is evidence in the interviews to suggest that these imperfections undermine managers' trust in key performance indicators. When both the local authority and the Scottish Government outline performance indicators such an act restricts the chance for modernising services from within the operational level and so it is still a top-down form of provision as Christie (2011) says. The shortfall between theory and practice found in the interviews reinforces Christie's argument. Managers agree by reasoning that if a manager undertakes his/her job wholeheartedly they can ascertain themselves what works and what does not, hence are capable of managing their service. For that reason, local managers believe that there is no real need for indicators especially those that are top-down in nature. Their argument against top-down indicators is around the sense of feeling undermined in their significant role as managers (as stressed in 7.4.4.2, p.173). This confirms findings by Scott (2007) who

observes similar difficulties being experienced and therefore determines that control is at the top and not in the ward.

In terms of reporting, policymakers favour the 'traffic light system' as a method of monitoring performance. They do not have much time to read bulky documents and this way of reporting suits them well as traffic light colours are used to indicate thus clearly highlighting any concerns or improvements. This follows the conclusions of the literature on the ease of using the 'traffic light' method (Mackie 2008). Despite this, stakeholders and policymakers of the ward warn against having too many indicators which can be confusing.

The need for outcome-focused indicators is also recognised by managers (see section 7.4.4.2, p.173). At present indicators rather focus on output although managers acknowledge that there are some instances of indicators that consider outcomes. This shows a slight improvement in the Scottish context as Mackie's literature review found a lack of outcome-focused indicators in 2008. Currently however, managers speak about the problem that outcomes are predetermined prior to the start of the service or programme and are often viewed by managers as impossible to accomplish due to the subjectivity of their services and the personal circumstances of the users. Gardner (1998) and Thomas (2006) write about the limitations of indicators, particularly in determining underlying issues, which leads the authors to warn against over reliance on what indicators show. Managers collectively declared that the focus on indicators in their experience can often ignore the user and their needs. This can make indicators rather misleading.

While the significance of the NPF has been outlined for example in Chapter Two, policymakers within the interviews appear rather brief and general about it. A number of them admit they find it complex and would rather have it simplified. This insight is noteworthy and the additional implications for performance and the effectiveness of the framework are worth further investigation.

#### **8.4.4 Three Es: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Economy and a fourth E**

There are indications to suggest that the three Es are still an important influence on managers when delivering their services. The interviews find that local public service managers are aware of the three Es. As managers suggest, their essence is understood in that effectiveness (the degree to which an organisation meets its aims and targets), efficiency (the cost of producing outputs) and economy (providing value for money) all tie together the customer experience and satisfaction, within the aims and delivery of the service. A number of managers credit them with the significance that if management are focused on them in the operation of the service they lead to better service provision that benefits all: the user, the staff and the service. Such importance is frequently defined within the existing literature too by the likes of Lane (1993), Horton and Farnham (2002), Greiling (2006), Radnor and Barnes (2007), and Flynn (2007).

Within the context of the three Es, excellence is cited as the potentially fourth E by one of the managers, since it has important influences on delivery. In the literature, equity has been identified as the fourth E by a number of authors (Gardner 1998; Flynn 2007). While excellence is reasoned to mean exceptional service delivery in order to retain satisfied customers, equity stands for serving all equally. Everyone has a chance to use and benefit from the given service. This idea reveals the similarity between practice and theory as both stakeholders and academics signify the fundamentality of being customer centred and highlight the need for the enhancement of service provision.

Managers say that the three Es are part of their management roles – using them as lenses through which to look at their service. They also highlight the Es' prominence especially within the current funding restraints which they have been experiencing. However managers also make the point that with targets, outcomes and indicators often being determined centrally the Es fall outwith their personal control. The study confirms the importance of the theory of the three Es and proves that such a theory is still central to public service provision at the local level. The results here are

significant because they demonstrate that within the ward the performance culture has supported turning attention to the key pillars of sustainable performance: effectiveness, economy and efficiency and lately equity.

#### **8.4.5 Gathering and reporting on data**

As stated earlier, both primary and secondary research indicate that measurement is predominantly undertaken by quantitative means, which are also known as ‘hard’ measures (Thomas 2006). They are readily applicable since they are cost effective, simple to measure, and numbers and volume orientated so the results can be compared to other similar services. As the interviews show, this form of measuring commonly takes place within community education services, despite their focusing on and providing ‘soft’ service aspects that managers warn cannot simply be quantified.

Problems caused by forcing complex services that are subjective by nature to use quantitative measures are identified in the research. It is found that most managers have experienced such problems (see section 7.4.5, p.179). This creates a strain on management and masks many significant aspects of the service which might not be measured due to not being quantifiable. This argument confirms similar findings by Adcroft and Willis (2005) and Seddon (2008) who note that underperformance can happen because of an excessive focus on results and that vital aspects of the service often are not being followed up. As discussed in Chapter Four (Adcroft and Willis 2005; Scott 2007; Burchett 2010), this is because those aspects do not tie in with the quantitative measures that are being used for recording. As a result they often go unnoticed or no action is taken on them due to them not being the centre of attention. Such a view is echoed by managers who appear concerned about funders not looking into the details of results and what those represent. According to managers this can result in wrong decisions, or decisions not needed at that time being made, and so contribute little to improvements in the area of activity supplied by their services.

The fear of losing aspects of the service that cannot be quantified, despite such aspects contributing to better results within the service, is also found in management interviews. Therefore, for decision-making, vigilance is needed according to both the secondary research (Talbot 2007) and the local managers within the primary research. While some managers report on using case studies for measuring, these are still viewed as rare. This finding calls for better suited measurement, that pairs multidimensional services providing intangible, subjective services with qualitative ways of measurement. While the theory is welcomed by the literature as discussed in Chapter Four, the literature also underpins the primary research which provides evidence that quantitative measures will always be present and favoured within public services. They are easy to collect and inexpensive at a time when tax payers are more and more eager to know how their money is spent and what results it brings (Talbot 2007; Mackie 2013; Burton 2013). This, however, as managers conclude, significantly undermines the aim of delivering quality continually in 'soft' services. After careful analysis of the subject, further attention is needed for 'soft' service operations and the nature of the data they use for performance measurement.

A new theme emerges from the findings of this study which has not been frequently discussed in the literature. It is that managers are often concerned about not getting feedback from their superiors on their performance after sending their data away to them which makes managers doubt the meaning of their results: whether the results were acceptable or not. The belief amongst managers is that this happens mainly because the results do not reflect the aims of the local authority or central government and so top management does not wish to draw attention to their department not being as fruitful. Managers openly admit to the existence of a 'fear of exposure' culture within the public domain which they blame for the sector not prospering further. Seemingly the number one focus is not on the service users but on conforming to public service culture. This finding also brings with it the suggestion that there exists a form of not drawing attention to some aspects of performance results, which could lead to ineffectiveness and imbalances within the performance system. If unwanted results are not dealt with, it can result in a waste of resources.

The lack of feedback leads to further uncertainty for managers. They worry that specific demand from service users might go undetected if the senior managers or funders miss this aspect of the manager's report or misinterpret the origins of users' needs. Managers are not often asked to discuss their results in detail with senior management or funders, so this worry seems reasonable particularly as those evaluating the local managers' reports are often disconnected from the ward and, therefore, might not see the connection between some important aspects.

Similarly, figures might have less of a direct meaning to funders than the manager who knows what influenced that final result. Therefore further consideration is vital for eliminating the risk of misunderstanding happening. Perhaps it would be more time-consuming, but one way would be by open dialogue between senior managers, funders and the service manager to discuss and clarify the true meaning of results. The vital nature of communication between senior management levels and local service managers on the nature of the data and what it actually represents emerges within this research. The literature also emphasises the need for open dialogue between senior management and managers (Moore 1995; Seddon 2008). This aspect needs further attention in order to ensure that the services which are needed are delivered especially within deprived areas and at a time when services are undergoing further budget cuts.

#### **8.4.5.1 Reporting accountability**

The so called "wicked problem" the literature identifies (Horton and Farnham 2002) – that the management of the sector is difficult to improve due to its rigidity, complexity and lack of clarity (as noted in section 4.7) – is reinforced by the managers in the ward. They perceive the sector to be even more resistant to change (i.e. rigid) due to the fact that it is following government decision-making and so it is more centralised rather than being reactive to local, micro-level needs. This is in line with the investigations of Mwita (2000) and Scott (2007). Yet it is in contradiction to NPM and NPG principles (see Table 4.3, p.80) and Christie's (2011) local

government recommendations (Table 4.2, p.79). In such an environment the tasks of managers are significantly condensed, as Lipsky (2010) finds. This is illustrated in the findings by local managers as described earlier in greater detail. The idea of having more freedom for public managers as Hood (1991), and Pollitt (2003) anticipated as a result of the policy direction influenced by NPM has not fully been validated by the local managers in the ward.

Ward management roles are perceived as being tightly controlled by the processes of performance and scrutiny from more senior management. Managers dislike such tight control. They reason it habitually means they are unable to take actions as they see fit and so there seems to be a lack of freedom. They claim this to be a consequence of NPM, how it impacts on their role in management. Such remarks oppose Ferlie *et al.*'s (2007), and Jong's (2009) view that NPM provides 'too much independence for managers' (see Table 3.3, p.37). Based on the findings of the study, the burdening of services by targets and indicators, while at times understood by managers, is not always agreed to and so they call for a change, using alternatives. Alternatives would be based on their long experience, often lasting for decades. They envisage a way in which they could get more involvement and authority at a local level to deal with local issues more promptly as and when they arise. The theory behind such thinking emphasises Hood's (1991) first doctrine of NPM ("Hands-on professional management of public organisation" see Table 3.2, p.32) which proposes that managers have to have authority and freedom to manage.

Local managers argue that, for a longed for change which is also sustainable, their personal in-depth knowledge is essential. At present they perceive that, when it comes to decision-making, senior management do not frequently take local managers' ideas and thoughts on board. They point out that this would need to be altered in a system that sets out to bring about change. Thereby local managers' tasks and dealings would be public policy in action, as Lipsky (2010) notes. Indeed managers identify that their actions to deliver public policy could be advantageous in various ways. In particular it appears that a strong focus on measuring, rather than performing as a service, is a source of worry for management. This influences service quality and so it becomes the dominant issue of concern (see section 7.4.5.1,



p.183). Not only the literature (Ball 2000; Talbot 2007; Burchett 2010) but also local managers are concerned about the negative impacts of the measurement culture and how it results in increased recording and recordkeeping which in reality reduces the time for focussing on the actual service and management's opportunity for personal interaction with users. Consequently, the measurement culture delivers the opposite effect to that which is intended. As one of the aims in public policy with NPM principles has been to reduce bureaucracy and improve services, this finding is significant.

Another finding of the interviews is that managers feel at times caught in the middle between their service users they serve and the funders and or top management of the service, the managers' superiors. As public service providers they are accountable to both parties. However they note that users and funders, top management have dissimilar ideas and expectations of the service and so reporting and fulfilling those expectations for both parties are difficult. Such finding reflects the literature (see section 4.5.1) and the views of many like Scott (2007) and Simmons *et al.* (2009).

In agreement with Adcroft and Willis (2005), managers of the ward reason that due to such a high level of performance requirements (i.e. data collection and justification) which they argue do not often reflect real life taking place in the locality, their role involves a large amount of paperwork. This seems to suggest that movement within public service reform to reduce its bureaucratic nature has not been fully effective, thereby conforming to the observations of Ball (2000), Scott (2007) and Seddon's (2008). Paperwork is acknowledged to prevent managers from actively taking part in the service provision. Consequently, they question the positive impact of a performance culture on their organisation as they share the view that often their provided service suffers because of it. Such a statement is significant insofar as the whole performance measurement focus (see Table 4.3, p.80) has been developed to keep the users firmly in the centre of operations and so meet their needs by improved service provision.

If performance is becoming an obstacle to achieving customer satisfaction and improved service provision then this questions the whole purpose of performance measurement practices within a public service environment (as discussed in Chapter

Four). Therefore, this finding implies the need and timeliness for changes to take place in regulating performance within the public domain. Managers in the interviews highlight what Bruijn (2002) and Adcroft and Willis (2005) also advocate, that the measurement culture as a whole (especially measuring, justifying and conforming to pre-set targets) significantly reduces the skills and professionalism of managers to navigate the service, using their own knowledge and expertise to respond to emerging local needs and expectations. As a result of performance measurement, they report often not feeling in control of their own services and unable to do their jobs. The idea of NPM that well trained and knowledgeable management needs to be hired to oversee public services (see Chapter Three) is considerably undermined by the practice that such managers are apparently unable to manage due to the restrictions imposed from senior levels which they find are neither in line with nor understanding of the locality and its requirements. Yet such professional managers are unable to do anything about this issue which often leads to frustration and job dissatisfaction.

Such views are even more significant because managers foresee a breaking point within public service management if this performance culture is not reversed or regulated. This is simply because such practices are seemingly not allowing correct service management based on the individual service. Consequently, if services are not already managed in a locally needed and meaningful way, as managers of the ward frequently outline, this finding implies that there is ongoing waste in the form of resources, time and expertise that are not being allocated to serve users in the best way. Therefore, it can be said that the current performance culture with its increased focus on performance seemingly does not always offer best service delivery or create an opportunity for change particularly in the deprived parts of the ward. This presents a stark contrast between how the theories of NPM are intended to influence the direction of public service provision (and also how performance measurement principles have been expected to work) and the reality of how they actually operate at the micro-level of public management.

#### **8.4.6. Evaluation**

The interviewees of the ward reflect the literature (section 4.6, p.71) by outlining the shortfalls of evaluations. Whereas residents do not seem to feel that evaluation is undertaken because they cannot observe improvements (and hence do not feel particularly listened to or responded to), managers admit to many challenges with evaluation. They locate the main source of problems as being outside their control. They point to the difficulty of pre-set plans with which they need to work, that are tailored to the needs of the funder rather than the service users. Even if the plans seem accurate at the start of the year, managers often need to react to emerging needs later on which is not in line with the predetermined outcomes. In addition, lack of time is also held responsible for managers and their staff not being able to study the results closely enough and learn from both success and underperformance (see section 7.4.6, p.186). Opportunity for local managers to evaluate needed to be granted for services to respond in the best way to needs. Providing this opportunity and time for it is an important part of organisations' long-term planning in order to yield meaningful results. This view is accepted by both the literature and local managers.

Whilst there is a slow increase in qualitative methods for evaluation (Weiss 1998; Powell 2006) similarly to that outlined in Chapter Four, managers of the ward blame the predominantly quantitative measures for inaccurate representation of the service. Those measures will mask underlying issues and limit the understanding and the chance to alter services in the direction of customer needs. Such negative aspects of evaluation are also frequently noted in the literature by the likes of Weiss (1998); Brickmayer and Weiss (2000); Msila and Sethlhako (2013).

It is because of these 'out of management control' characteristics that Weiss (1998) proposes that managers should not be held responsible for the achievement or non-achievement of their services. Service managers of the ward fully agree with such a statement. Moreover, they highlight that evaluation is responsible for delivering and assisting change. Therefore, they would like to see more emphasis on it, following

the thoughts of Weiss (1998) and Brickmayer and Weiss (2000). The findings of both the secondary literature and the primary research urge for better evaluation practices that are allocated from the top management level to local managers. The findings also show that the delivery of such change at local level requires more discussion between local and top level managers so they share evaluation and identify how services could be improved accordingly.

#### **8.4.7 Quality Management**

Parts of the issues raised under the quality management headings in Chapters Four and Seven, have been already addressed within this discussion chapter. For instance references to Table 4.2 (based on Christie's findings), which comes under quality management in Chapter Four, have been made throughout this chapter. As a way of improving quality services citizen involvement and citizen centred services were identified and have already been debated in greater detail earlier.

As outlined within the secondary research, service satisfaction is closely dependent on service quality (Gary and Guy 2013). Although residents admit to knowing little about how their services operate, in general they do not seem too satisfied with their locally available services. These views conform to the literature that discloses that within deprived areas, services are strained. This is partly because of the extra demands they constantly face and also due to the fact that the quality of services are lower than in other areas (Duffy 2000; Department for Social Development 2003; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005; Hastings *et al.* 2005; Hastings *et al.* 2012; Besemer and Bramley 2012).

The findings from the resident interviews appear to highlight that for the authorities, quality is secondary to money. Therefore, many locals in the deprived parts worry about the quality of services on offer yet they tend to accept such services when in need, reasoning that they have no alternative. Such opinions reemphasise the thoughts of Duffy (2000), Hastings *et al.* (2005), Seddon (2008) and Hastings and

Matthews (2011) that while middle class residents have the ability if they wish to use alternative services in place of public services, residents in deprived areas often have no options. Whilst high quality and user-focused public services are anticipated by NPM principles (as discussed in Chapter Three and in Table 4.3, p.80) the above finding appears to show that there is a shortfall between theory and practice at ward level.

This lack of choice that often leads to dissatisfaction in residents policymakers and managers pointed out as being partly due to the fact that residents have higher expectations from public services than before. The findings of this research support the review of surrounding literature, in particular Bovaird (2011) who urges for citizen involvement in service delivery planning which would make them more aware of their services and services would understand what is important to users. However if, as managers note, service users' feedback is problematic to gather because locals are unable to articulate their feelings about the service and level of satisfaction with it this causes serious problems not only for management but for the authorities too. It can lead to misinterpretation and thus the further dissatisfaction of residents. Whilst the general understanding amongst managers is that users are satisfied with their services, managers base this on their own interaction with customers. This implies that they have a subjective take (impression) of performance measurement in the area of customer satisfaction, which potentially presents itself as a bias when evidencing service performance criteria from the users' point of view.

## **8.5 Funding issues**

Funding cuts impacting on public services have been outlined throughout the research. Many have felt the squeeze of tighter budgets within an austere economic climate across the public sector. Yet managers in the primary research point out that cuts on them have been imposed ever since they started to work in the sector which typically means many years if not decades. The current economic downturn has been severe and demand for services is continuously rising whereas resources have been

decreasing (Christie 2011; LGA 2012; Burton 2013) (as discussed in Chapters Three and Four). These factors manifest themselves in the deprived parts of the ward even more strongly, as managers reflect that locals are more vulnerable and less able to find alternative solutions to their needs unlike in the wealthier parts of the ward, providing confirmation that public services are indeed a critical element of daily life in deprived areas. Deprived areas have social issues that require extra effort from public services to tackle (Murray 2001; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005) but financial constraints make it very difficult.

A separate point is reinforced by the primary research findings in which managers acknowledge that many very important as well as popular local services only receive short-term funding on a yearly basis. For some services this has often been the pattern for decades. Such a pattern creates extreme uncertainty as to whether the service will continue, which makes planning ahead impossible, according to managers. Such planning ahead is viewed as particularly important in the case of a deprived community because in order to make sustainable and lasting changes a long timescale is essential. That is missing in an uncertain and short-term funding cycle. Chapter Three (section 3.4.1, p.42) indicates that officials (Accounts Commission 2012; Audit Scotland 2013), committees (Christie 2011), and the local authority itself (CEC 2010b; CEC 2011a; CEC 2013) all anticipate that cuts to public services are expected to be ongoing for many more years to come. This means that dedicated longer term funding is unlikely in the near future.

Managers perceive the impact of cuts on their work at times as very challenging. It results in them being less optimistic about the future of their services and also about the public domain as a whole. They often recognise a source of tension between their enthusiasm to help others via their service and the restrictions placed on them due to the funding cuts. Such opinions are in harmony with Diamond and Liddle's (2013) observation on the challenges and consequences the cuts have been having on professionals and on their development which raises questions about the future direction of public service provision. Their development is noteworthy as for instance demotivation could pose a risk along with lacking in the appropriate skills needed to oversee their services (Horton 2006; Diamond and Liddle 2013). Both are

necessary for the continuity of service delivery which is further strained by increased demand and decreased funds.

Locals too show awareness of the current cuts seeing them as characterising the public domain. Most notably, there is agreement amongst residents that their services should not or could not be further reduced. They already sense a gap between available services and their ability to tackle the local area's complex needs. Managers often speak about how their services have the potential to change habits and transform locals' lives. Prejudicing the continuation of these crucial services through uncertain funding and lack of long-term planning is not perceived by managers as the way to deliver the results that are needed for the area.

The findings of the primary research also show that key initiatives within the area are often only set up for a couple of years and having such a short timeframe seemingly prevents long standing changes from happening. Managers believe that consistency and a longer period of time are necessary. They also indicate that while the programme and service will have an impact on those residents that they managed to serve over that short time, they cannot reach and include as many residents as they need to. Therefore managers agree that a short timeframe is very limited in the context of the longevity of the complex issues that contribute to the area's deprivation. This finding is noteworthy since all managers interviewed perceive that despite all the efforts, activities and plans of the local authority in the deprived areas of the ward, seemingly so far those have not managed to significantly reduce inequality, deal with the social fabric of the area or considerably transform the locality. While some results have been achieved by public service delivery within the deprived parts of the ward, changes to inequality within the ward have not been far reaching. Such views are reinforced in Chapter Two that highlight from statistics about Forth that in every major aspect the ward is behind the Scottish standard (Community Planning 2006; SIMD 2009, 2012; Census 2011; NESHG 2011).

Other local publications seem to support the need for further plans to tackle inequality. For example, as also noted in Chapter Two (section 2.2, p.9) publications made the point that Forth Ward is still behind other wards and a council publication (CEC 2011c) reported that Forth has the lowest life expectancy in Edinburgh.

Therefore service managers in the ward urge the local authority and funders to make long-term commitments to and with the ward or else what is foreseen is deepened inequality. Community education services are perceived as important to help and support locals and encourage better self-reliance (Edwards *et al.* 1993: Ward 2008; Popkin *et al.* 2009 and Ledwith 2011). This would result in less public service dependency which would save taxpayers' money.

However locals and local managers do not see the authority's approach as working towards these much needed outcomes or a change within the ward. On the contrary, they state that because services are subjective at times of cuts these services are often the first to be reduced since they produce results that are not easily measurable or visible within the short timeframe that authorities assign to them. This key problem is also discussed by Ly (2010); Besemer and Bramley (2012) and Hastings *et al.* (2012) see Chapter Four. The literature (Chapters Two, Three and Four) and the primary research findings (Chapter Seven) are in harmony. These recognise the significance of long-term initiatives and service provision. This is noteworthy as long-term initiatives and planning are found to be key factors for sustainable public service delivery in the ward. Long-term planning can help to provide better and more customer focused services and work towards successful eradication of inequality. Public service cuts affect the delivery of ward services. Cuts significantly reduce the scope of community education initiatives and programmes due to the uncertainty surrounding their future. Such service reductions have been repeatedly highlighted within the primary research to have a detrimental impact on the social and economic development of the deprived parts of the ward.



## 8.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings from the interviews (the primary research) and the literature review (the secondary research), to further the research aim. This was to investigate performance measurement of community education services at Scottish local government level, within the context of Forth Ward, Edinburgh.

Residents of Forth Ward seem sceptical about the work of their local authority in providing public services. This is often with the perception that the local authority does not understand the needs of the area, especially in the deprived parts of the ward. The council is considered as removed, not involving residents in decision-making or, when it does, often not listening to the views of the public. Generally there is found to be a lack of trust in the local authority. Improving the level of trust needs to get further attention in order to try to resolve the relationship between the ward and the local authority. The locals wish to provide more input, but are reluctant to do so because they do not see it as worthwhile. They do consider that mutual decision-making is important however in order that local priorities are taken into account.

Residents and managers named community education as a public service that could potentially transform the area by delivering sustainable change. Such provision could lead to more self-reliant citizens able to deal with personal issues. This then would reduce service reliance and save taxpayers' money. However, for community education to deliver benefits longer timescales and security of funding are needed. These are often absent.

In terms of performance in local services, the shared opinion of local managers echoes the view that is frequently endorsed within public services literature. They believe that the core rationale of the public domain, which is intangible in nature, has suffered over the years since making the sector rather more business-like became an aim. Some important aspects of public service provision are going unnoticed due to not being measured or not being able to be measured. This is because either those aspects are not current priorities of senior management, despite often being

considered by local managers as very important in the operation of the service, or they are not measured because of their unmeasurable nature, especially when using hard measures as the tool. The danger is that the soft, unmeasurable and subjective aspects are the essence and uniqueness of this sector therefore, those cannot be accurately measured by private sector methods.

Losing focus on the essence of public services has damaging consequences and can lead to having measures and targets met on paper yet without providing quality. This can pose the risk of measurement being meaningless and in the longer term failing to deliver what is required. This could mean that money and resources are being misused. The rich data from both academics (in the literature) and stakeholders (in the ward) has provided further insight on the subject of measurement. Both the primary and secondary research highlight the many challenges the procedure entails such as increased paperwork and reporting, pre-set targets and outcomes from top levels, time and funding restrictions, and the dominance of quantitative measures.

The discussions surrounding residents' views seem to support the concept of shortfalls created by measurement practices. Lack of understanding and knowledge of the operation of services is seen to be responsible for the acceptance of lower quality services. Further attention is needed to be given to service provision particularly in the deprived areas of the ward.

Identifying the severity of these difficulties has led managers to reveal a need for change in the public domain. It would need to allow managers more scope for managing their services. Without a change, managers fear the sector will become dysfunctional very soon, unable to serve appropriately the users, which is the aim of the sector.

The next chapter provides conclusions that can be drawn from reflection upon all the information which has been presented in the thesis.

## **Chapter Nine – Conclusion**

## **Chapter Nine – Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The aim of this research was to investigate performance measurement of community education services at Scottish local government level, within the context of Forth Ward, Edinburgh. The first chapter set out the research aim, objectives and questions. Chapter Two reviewed the literature to provide the setting for the research. Chapters Three and Four respectively presented a comprehensive review of the literature in the research areas that were considered significant to the research (New Public Management, New Public Governance as well as performance measurement). The methodological considerations and philosophy were debated in Chapter Five. Chapter Six introduced the method selected for this exploration, and provided explanation on how data was collected and analysed. The findings were reported in Chapter Seven. Those were then analysed and discussed in Chapter Eight. The discussion at large demonstrated consistency between the theories on performance measurement practices within the public domain and the data gathered through the qualitative in-depth interviews. This final chapter concludes the key elements of the research based on the findings and discussions. The original contributions of the study to knowledge are also contained in this chapter. Finally recommendations for further research are also presented.

The objectives of the study guided the research process and have been explored throughout the study. It is through pursuing these objectives that a well-rounded account of the ward has been accomplished. The study took into consideration the many stakeholders' views and enabled an understanding of the impact of public service reform at the micro-level of local government. Such rich findings offer managers and policy-makers the opportunity to broaden their understanding of Forth Ward and its dynamics which then present the possibility of further developments taking place within the locality.

## **9.2. Recapping the research questions**

This part addresses the research questions that were identified in Chapter One.

- What is the relationship between the local authority and the ward?

Concerning the deprived areas of the ward the prevailing view amongst stakeholders including local councillors, managers and residents was that the local authority did not do enough to uplift the area despite the funds the ward received. At the simplest level, stakeholders blamed budget cuts, which meant that less money was available for improvement work. The deeper point, as the evidence set out in this thesis indicated, was that it was a difficult task as such deep-rooted issues had been present in the locality for many decades. Even during more prosperous economic times those problems had still not been eradicated. The council did not have a good reputation in deprived areas as it was presented as removed from an understanding of the real issues these localities had been facing. However the sense of being overlooked was the view of residents across the whole ward as both the wealthier and poorer areas claimed that the other part of the ward appeared to them to be the focus for the council.

- What is the opinion of local people on the availability and delivery of services?

Stakeholders testified to the significance of local community education services and the part they played not only in providing community places that could contribute to people's quality of life but also in assisting individual development. However residents were more critical about the provision of their local services. Based on their experiences, there was room for improvement. Their common concern was the effective management of services with a focus on achieving more. This was important to citizens. They wanted to see current services enhanced so that they

better met the needs of the community. These, they considered, were currently not fully met. The kind of outcomes that residents wanted identified, and worked towards, were ones that would change the long-standing deprivation and social fabric of the area leading to a more prosperous locality. Meanwhile the expectation around outcomes in the affluent areas of the ward was mainly linked with the wish residents had to know that their taxes had been wisely spent. This shows a different set of priorities which might be indicative of the socio-economic stratification of the areas.

Giving voice to one's views concerning received services was something that divided opinion within the ward. In the more affluent areas, residents spoke up or got in touch with the service manager or their local councillors or even MP or MSP when they felt it was appropriate. In the deprived areas, the majority of people did not do so, instead accepting whatever they received even if they were not satisfied. This might reflect an already passive, or even defeated, mind-set. In terms of service availability, many locals were unaware of what services were on offer or where within the locality. This was well-known amongst local managers. They found it difficult to get locals to participate. Despite the many community education services within the ward, locals felt that more were needed to uplift the area. Partnership work amongst different public services was also nonetheless recognised as a necessary step to solve the deep-rooted issues for which the area has been infamous, for decades. As mentioned earlier, this includes the lowest level of life expectancy in Edinburgh (CEC 2011c), a below average level of employment, health, housing and education, and a higher level of crime (SIMD 2009).

- In what ways does performance measurement operate in Forth Ward?

Performance measurement is undertaken within the ward services in order to follow Scottish Government as well as The City of Edinburgh Council policies. Performance measurement practices are therefore part of higher level management's requirements, and funders', and are carefully pre-set and in line with their scrutiny requirements. Since these are imposed on the ward services from above, performance measurement is a bureaucratic exercise. Stakeholders admitted to the phenomenon of

‘what gets measured gets done’ which limited service provision because many important details of a service or programme were not followed up due to not being part of the criteria used for measurement. In the field of community education this was more harmful owing to the recognition that the subjective nature of the services was often lost as it was not captured by objective and mostly quantitative measures. Qualitative measures were not particularly favoured by funders or higher level management due to those requiring additional attention when evaluating, which involved extra time and thus cost. While there was evidence given in the interviews that there was an increase in the use of qualitative measures within the field, they needed further promotion.

The bureaucratic nature of measurement also served as a barrier to management undertaking their tasks effectively because of the increased amount of time they had to spend away from the users to fill in forms, monitor and report on performance and justify their actions. This was regarded as disadvantageous for service delivery and as an ineffective way to capitalise on the skills and experiences of managers. Managers and users alike trusted that qualified managers had what it took to provide and ensure effective, economic and efficient service delivery without the tight performance measurement systems. Therefore, stakeholders argued that if the focus was on the actual delivery rather than performance measurement, more benefits could be reaped. This means there is a duality of perspective in that the tight focus on measurement is intended to act as an enforcer of delivery and encourager of service improvement yet the actual act of measuring was seen by interviewees as an obstacle to delivery.

- In what way and by whom are performance targets established?

The key performance targets were revealed to be mostly determined at a higher level and thus local service managers needed to follow those. Evidence in the primary research showed that this created a tension between the needs of the locality and the expectations of the funders or higher management, with local managers being ‘caught in the middle’. While some managers said they had the opportunity to

negotiate with higher management or funders on targets, most had little input. Such circumstances often led to managers feeling as if their hands were tied because there was little room left for creativity and flexibility within their service operation or for their personal input and experience. These obstacles were also reflected in the users' accounts when perceiving services as unresponsive to their needs. This therefore revealed that, for local improvement and meeting the needs of the users, more autonomy has to be granted to local managers who oversee and engage with the locality and its day-to-day life.

- How are the processes of performance measurement undertaken in local services?

The analysis of the processes unearthed many insights into the practice of performance measurement and its real worth. The findings on targets have just been outlined above. The usefulness of indicators was linked to them being well-set so as to guide the direction of the service and also raise areas of underperformance. Hence there was realisation that the number of indicators required further reduction. At the same time there was a need to apply outcome focused indicators as opposed to the majority which focused on output and not on the consequences the results brought about. There was a realisation that a balance needed to be reached between quantitative and qualitative indicators to ensure that a wider spread of qualitative indicators was applied. Their prominence was reinforced for a number of reasons. Firstly, qualitative indicators could lessen the inflexibility of the system that quantitative indicators could not due to their nature. Secondly, qualitative indicators suggested more understanding of services because subjective instances of services could be recorded that would not be detected simply by quantitative indicators. Finally, managers recognised the prominence of the three Es (effectiveness, efficiency and economy) and aiming to justify them in services.

Many difficulties were acknowledged with the performance measurement process. These mainly revolved around three aspects. Firstly, problems were raised with the nature of data that was collected. The data was mainly quantitative which did not



serve the profession and did not truly contribute to further understanding in order to help the planning and future direction of the services. Secondly, the increased bureaucracy brought about by measuring risk had a detrimental impact on the quality of the service. This was due to the large amount of performance paperwork that repeatedly prevented managers from actively taking part in the service provision. The nature of performance measurement within service operation was often an obstacle, instead of an assistance, to the service. Thirdly, funding cuts to services at a time when demand was generally increasing, presented itself as a challenge for both management and the service. Moreover, the uncertainty that surrounded the funding of community education services, especially initiatives and programmes, added further stress for local service managers and their staff. Such uncertainty did not support long-term planning which in many parts of the ward was seen as essential if services and essentially the area were to show improvements.

There was another concern about the quality of services in light of the performance measurement emphasis. While managers wished to do their best to provide customer satisfaction, users argued that, for the authorities, quality of service was less important than the money invested in it which seemed to contradict what was commonly argued namely that one of the main causes of dissatisfaction was users' higher expectations of their services. In terms of evaluation, residents did not perceive improvements to the area (other than in the form of new houses) therefore, they rejected the notion that evaluation took place or that the council or services acted upon the outcomes of services. Managers held the system in which they operated as responsible for there being no visible improvements. Their arguments formed around the features that were out of their management control. These did not allow for easily visible improvements in the locality, given its long standing deprivation and the complex issues that affected many individuals in the deprived areas. These were: pre-set plans, quantitative methods for evaluation, lack of feedback on service performance from higher levels or funders and lastly, scarcity of time as a team to reflect on the results and use it for future planning.

- What are the attitudes of service managers?

Most managers have been in their job for a number of years and often for a decade or decades. Such longevity has given them insight into the life of the area. Most of them resided within the locality too. Some of them have been working since long before the emphasis on performance within the public domain emerged. Based on their own observations and experiences, they saw a gap between what was being done for the area and what it actually needed to improve for the longer term. Such a gap caused unease and negativity amongst local service managers. This was especially so when coupled with the cuts to their own services and the weaknesses of the performance culture i.e. the increased importance of performance and achieving outcomes, yet limited input granted for them. Further hardship was forecast by them which would decrease the prospects of betterment of the area which is what stakeholders mutually desire. Their specific field was perceived to be more top-down than it used to be, which brought with it disadvantages such as demotivating managers because the measurement culture reduced their ability to use their skills and professionalism freely. They admitted to gaming in order to ensure continued income from the funder and thus continuity of the service. The practice also served to not draw attention to some service parts that did not deliver well. Based on managers' remarks at the end of interviews many felt isolated and unaware that other managers might struggle with similar issues and worries. Hence open discussion amongst them in the area would be of great benefit. While managers enjoyed their work, they were disappointed by not being in a position to fully deliver what the area needed from their services. Though they praised the significance of the field, more recognition of and autonomy for them was justified as being a further need. Moreover managers expected the field of community education to respond better to localities and their individual uniqueness.

- What evidence is there that the local people benefit from the performance culture?

The data collected in this research from the various stakeholders points to the conclusion that performance measurement has no specifically felt advantage on local people and their encounters with local community education services. The qualitative interviews with residents and users in the ward revealed very little deeper than surface knowledge of service provision and performance. This was reinforced by local managers who dismissed the idea that locals had any greater insight than this into the operations of the services they provided. Residents mistrusted the performance measurement approach. They felt that performance measurement of local services counted for nothing by stating that despite services apparently meeting their targets, improvements could not be witnessed or felt in the locality as a result of good service performance. Such dismay led locals to question the authenticity and purpose of the whole performance process, reasoning that the resources (both financial and labour costs) which such procedures entail could be better spent.

Arguments also centred on the view that performance was a “tick box” exercise, which was to meet the requirements of the auditors and was not created with the users and local people in mind. If they had been, the local people would get more involved to provide feedback on the operation which then would be followed up and acted upon, thus shaping the service. Not only residents but also local managers were aware of the shortfalls of the performance culture when admitting that despite meeting the targets, their services could do much better. This justifies the conclusion that the system is far from perfect and needs further fine-tuning and change if performance is truly to serve the local people.

### 9.2.1 Main conclusions of the study

The importance of performance within the Scottish public domain has been stated throughout this study. It is even more important in light of the existing inequalities highlighted by Christie (2011) and Matthews (2013) which were found to result in increased demand for public services. At the same time long-term spending cuts were projected to impact on the sector for many years to come (Butler 2012; McLaren 2013). Cuts had influence at ward and local level too (Hastings *et al.* 2012) which was also outlined throughout the thesis. Managers in the ward reinforced the prominence of service performance. This was being used in order to reveal how well money had been spent and the results it achieved. Performance had also the purpose of accountability for value for money service provision. Over the years, the increased importance of performance measurement in the public sector has been recognised by the managers in the ward. While they approved the need to show accountability with respect to public funds, they questioned the effectiveness of the current performance system.

This argument centred on the predetermined nature of managing performance within the public domain. Higher management provided pre-set targets and often already predetermined expected outcomes and left little room for the manager to use their own experience. Such findings were in line with the literature (as stressed by many like Seddon 2008; Talbot 2010; Booker 2012; Baines 2013; Diamond and Liddle 2013). Similarly, residents complained about the perceived top-down nature the council and the ward had. It means the belief that decision making is centralised, which did not allow for residents input in matters that concerned them.

One of the key findings was that despite the focus on performance measurement, outcomes were not necessarily improved. There were many reasons identified for this. One was the way in which performance was measured, using mainly quantitative 'hard' measures which could not reveal particular issues and characteristics of a service, especially in the case of subjective services such as community education services in the ward. It was also a burden on managers to focus

on showing results inappropriately early in their subjective services. This is in a field where it might take a long time for results to show by noticing a change or an impact due to having received a service. Having collected the data some managers were confused about how accurate it really was in evidencing the performance of the service. As not all aspects contributing to an outcome were taken into account there were some hidden impacts and circumstances which could have influenced an outcome. This was acknowledged to be misleading, often causing misunderstanding between funders or higher management and the manager of the local service. Those at a higher level were likely to be more detached from the area and its needs. They might have construed results in a different way to the manager familiar with the underlying issues which impacted on results. Equally the managers identified that they seldom received any feedback from superiors and funders on their paperwork which they felt did not help with planning ahead for the future. These concerns prompted managers to outline the importance of improving the communication between higher management and themselves.

Furthermore managers and residents alike admitted that for them performance was more like a “bureaucratic exercise” than an influencer. Its measurement was rather time consuming and involved an increased amount of paperwork which acted as a barrier to face-to-face interaction with users. These performance measurement arguments resonated with those in the critiques of NPM and performance measurement literature presented in Chapters Three and Four (for example Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Chaharbaghi 2007; Seddon 2008; Jong 2009; Talbot 2010).

Accordingly, there was a need for change in the way performance was used within the public sector, especially in services that were hard to measure in nature such as community education. The above stated problems surrounding performance practices (e.g. funding cuts, predetermined targets and outcomes that do not fit with the area, managers having less ability to manage and not enough influence, increased paperwork, short term scale for showing results, etc.) were somewhat recognised by not only service managers but also by politicians, councillors, and residents. They acknowledged that the way their local services operated at present was not fulfilling their expectations. They called for a change to review service operations and also the

way local authorities operated. The policy-making community together with managers and the literature in Chapter Three (CEC 2010a; Atkinson *et al.* 2010; Christie 2011; LGA 2012) foresaw that many services would not be able to survive unless changes took place.

Shaping services to be more reflective of local needs could be one of the ways to achieve more. This could be by greater inclusion of local managers (who have been serving their neighbourhood often for a long time). Top managers would need to take advantage and involve the knowledge that local managers have when planning ahead and setting targets and shaping the outcomes they wish to achieve. More freedom to managers when delivering local services is required to achieve customer centred service provision that is more concerned with quality than quantity. Evaluation also has to be a shared activity between managers and top management to clearly understand the local people and stay reactive to their needs when planning ahead. These practices could contribute to a more effective, economic and efficient service provision that would benefit the local authority in serving the needs of local people. In addition the local authority would need to involve and consult more local people. Being meaningfully heard and included in local decision making could increase local people's trust for their local authority that has been lacking for a long time. This would also empower citizens.

While at local level the CPP was present in the form of the NP, with the aim of ensuring local public services were responsive to locals' needs (Swinney 2015), such a body in Forth Ward was still not perceived as being effective and representative of the locality's needs, particularly in the deprived areas. According to Swinney (2015) such bodies were beginning to become successful agents for change. This study's findings in this particular ward did not support such an observation, reinforcing Matthews' (2012) research which did not find CPPs as being agents for change.

One of the themes that emerged from the primary research was how important the area's need for community education services is. Managers of local service provision united with service users in finding that the area would improve along with its services and their performance if citizens were more self-reliant rather than overly dependent on the public domain. Many like Edwards *et al.* (1993), Ward (2008),

Popkin *et al.* (2009), Ledwith (2011), and Nogues (2013) also recognise this. Stakeholders of the ward argued that such a service provision is fundamental to tackle the long standing socio-economic disparity that the deprived areas have been experiencing. To enable those localities to prosper, a change brought on by a more engaged and self-reliant community was viewed as timely. The literature also reflected the need for such a change in order to reduce inequality (Murray 2001; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2005; Lansley 2015).

In line with publications by Christie (2011), LGA (2012), Mackie (2013), and Miller and McTavish (2014) the decreasing funds to public services create many challenges. The short-term funds many community education services received within the ward often did not allow for planning ahead nor provide an approach to tackling the problems which some of the ward's areas had been having for decades. Many services could not thrive under this uncertainty. Some programmes ceased to exist due to discontinued funding. Current programmes have all felt the cuts by reduced hours or decreased staff numbers. Some services have been operating on short term funds for a long time which put increased pressure on workers and meant the service could not plan ahead and achieve its full long term potential. These issues bring with them the suggestion that for sustainable betterment of the area to be achieved a long term dedication of funds is essential for these services. Otherwise the endemic deprivation of ill health, addictions and poverty, already many decades long, would prevail in the Forth Ward of the Scottish capital in the twenty first century.

### **9.3 Contribution to knowledge**

The lack of attention that local government and more specifically the ward level have received in terms of public management academic interest and research was outlined in Chapters One and Two. Meanwhile the topics of performance and its measurement have also become key aspects of public management. The literature has highlighted the need for further investigation within local government (McConnell 2004; Keating 2005) as well as performance measurement of public service provision (Boyne *et al.*

2006; Talbot 2007; Sanger 2008). These two components served therefore as the specific areas in which the thesis sought to make a contribution by exploring them in the form of a case study in order to advance both academic and practical understanding of public service provision and performance measurement within Edinburgh's Forth Ward.

Community education was the selected service since some of the areas in the ward have had a long history of deprivation thus such a service could be significant for the improvement of those areas. The fact that Forth Ward has been infamous for its many decades of deprivation which has not been eradicated yet (NESHG 2011; SNS 2014) means that research into this ward has been timely. It has also contributed to further awareness of the operation and delivery of services in the ward and ultimately the lives of its residents. Judging by the experience of interviewing the managers they all seemed relieved to be listened to and at the end of the interviews admitted that they did not share these thoughts nor even make sense of these for themselves and so they were eager to read the thesis once completed to learn more about how other stakeholders felt about these matters. Therefore the study has a practical contribution to make by sharing knowledge and thus allows stakeholders and particularly managers to read about other managers' feelings and concerns about the demands of complying with performance measurement. Sharing this knowledge helps clarify and understand the common issues that ward managers face in their roles. Additionally, the primary research revealed the fragile relationship between the ward and the council which contributed to knowledge as their relationship, strained over many years, needs to be fully understood in order to find ways for future cooperation between them. Any solution has to have the ward and its long-term prosperity at the heart of its interest.

Due to the chosen method of case study by interviews, the varied stakeholders of the ward could be involved and understood, which further strengthened the validity and reliability of this research. 61 semi-structured interviews were conducted (each lasting between one to one and a half hours), a number that can be argued to be quite high for qualitative research (Baker and Edwards 2012). However it meant that the different stakeholder groups (local residents (service users and activists) both in the



deprived parts and the affluent part, local service managers, local councillors, MSPs and MPs) and their views could all be incorporated into the research. Being a basic knowledge-generating research (Kothari 2009; Sekaran and Bougie 2009), the many stakeholders facilitated enhancing the research contribution to the field of already existing knowledge. Another advantage of the methods selected was that many residents who have never participated were listened to and included in the primary research. According to them they have never felt listened to or involved in any research or survey concerning their perception of either local or general public services. Reaching out to this segment was another contribution to knowledge through this thesis, especially to help understand these participants' reasoning and needs which, therefore, stand to help in shaping the future direction of the ward.

Public service delivery related issues highlighted by the literature were also examined within the most micro-level of local government at the level on which residents come into contact with public services in their daily lives. The chosen ward was also significant inasmuch as it had both an affluent and deprived areas. That provided further understanding of real life public service provision, serving and responding to varied needs. There are no existing studies that have undertaken such an investigation and the contrast between the areas stressed the particular issues which residents of each respective area are dealing with. Another contribution is that despite aiming to provide more involvement to locals, by devolving more power to local government and communities, as well as more user centred services, residents still reported on not being at the heart of the service particularly in the deprived parts. As outlined in sections 9.2 and 9.2.1 this suggests the need for changes to allow for a more responsive, customer-centred, effective, efficient, and economic quality service delivery.

## **9.4 Future research**

This research was limited in that it could not report on all the public services of Forth Ward but only on one aspect: community education public services. Therefore, understanding other types of public services and their delivery in the ward would help to improve service provision in Forth Ward.

Another area that could be studied further is employee performance and its contribution to organisational performance. While this study focused solely on organisational performance rather than individual performance, it would be worthwhile to find out how performance impacts on service-delivering staff. The practices applied to manage employee performance would be a noteworthy contribution to knowledge especially amongst in-demand services.

In order to acquire a comprehensive view of the chosen locality, along with the generic stakeholders of the ward all the parliamentary representatives – both Scottish and Westminster – of Forth Ward were also interviewed. While all of them agreed to take part, at times the level to which some of them could not contribute to the study was surprising and not anticipated. These MPs and MSPs were elected to represent people in the ward yet often some of them seemed unaware of general characteristics of the areas they represented. This applied also to some of the local councillors who from time to time appeared not to be aware of some general facts regarding their ward. Correspondingly, residents often complained about seeing neither local councillors nor parliamentary representatives within the area, unless it was election time. Therefore, an investigation into the work of local councillors and parliamentary representatives at ward level seems to be timely and significant. Such investigation appears even more valuable as certain parliamentary representatives could not address some of the key policies of their own parties. This brings with it the suggestion of further research.

While this research opted in the end to use qualitative interviewing as its only method, focus groups could also be beneficial for capturing participants' accounts stimulated by other participants (Steward and Shamdasani 1990; Frey and Fontana

1993; Krueger 1998; Morgan 1998; Gilbert 2002). The focus groups with service users (which were piloted but discontinued) did not lead to significant data though they could be set up separately amongst the other different segments of stakeholders: service managers and ward representatives. Such a method could serve to ensure that important aspects of the topic are unearthed as the likelihood of a matter being raised in a focus group may be higher than in individual interviews. However organising a specific time that is suitable for all could be very problematic and the willingness to share with others or take part with others could also be a limitation. Yet the mutual exchange could lead to a decision on viable action points which could be implemented accordingly.

Finally further research on other wards in Scotland would help to draw a more accurate picture of local governance and performance measurement in practice. It could lead to enhanced, more efficient, effective and economic local public management which ultimately could produce improved results in the provision of public services.

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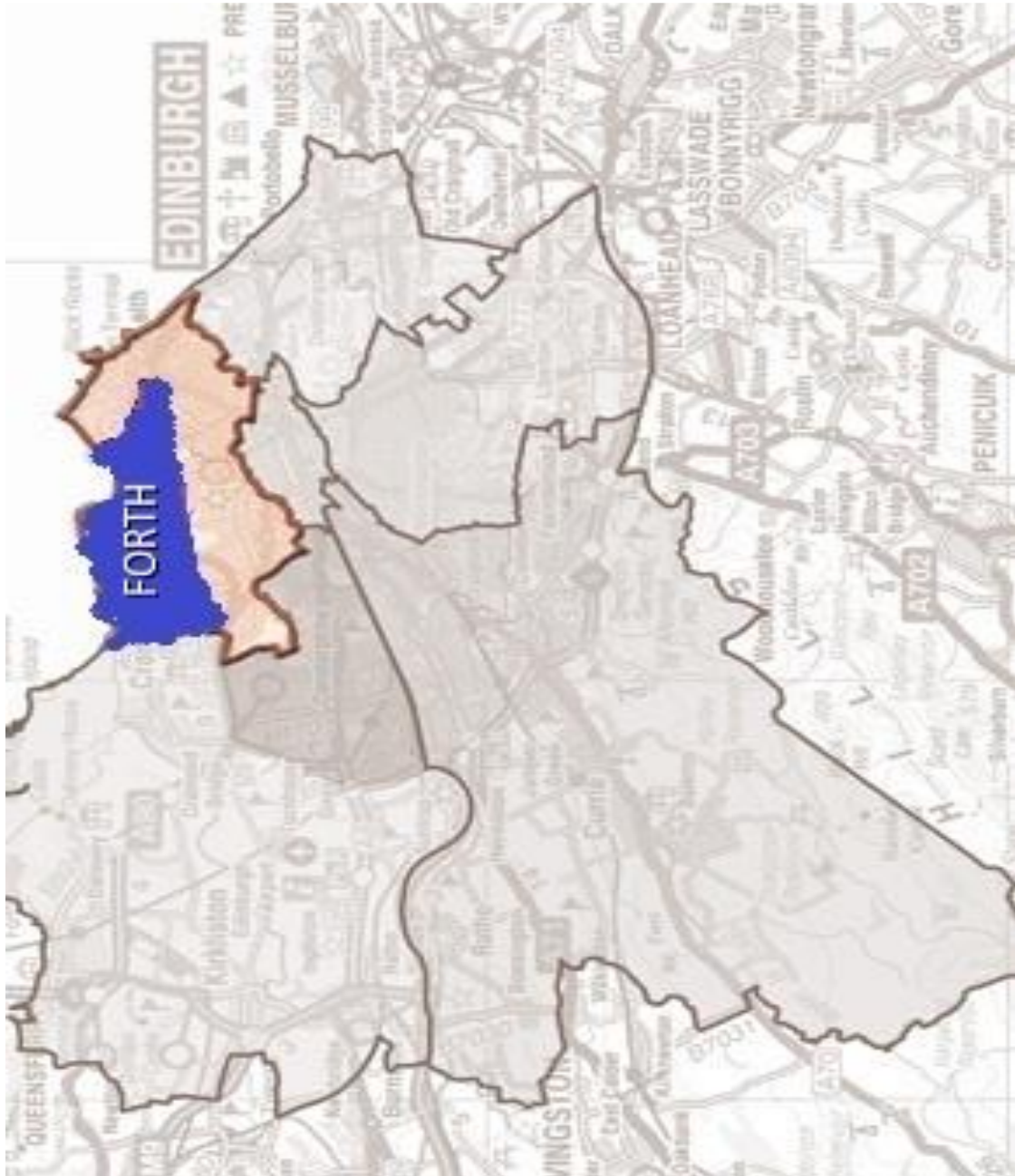
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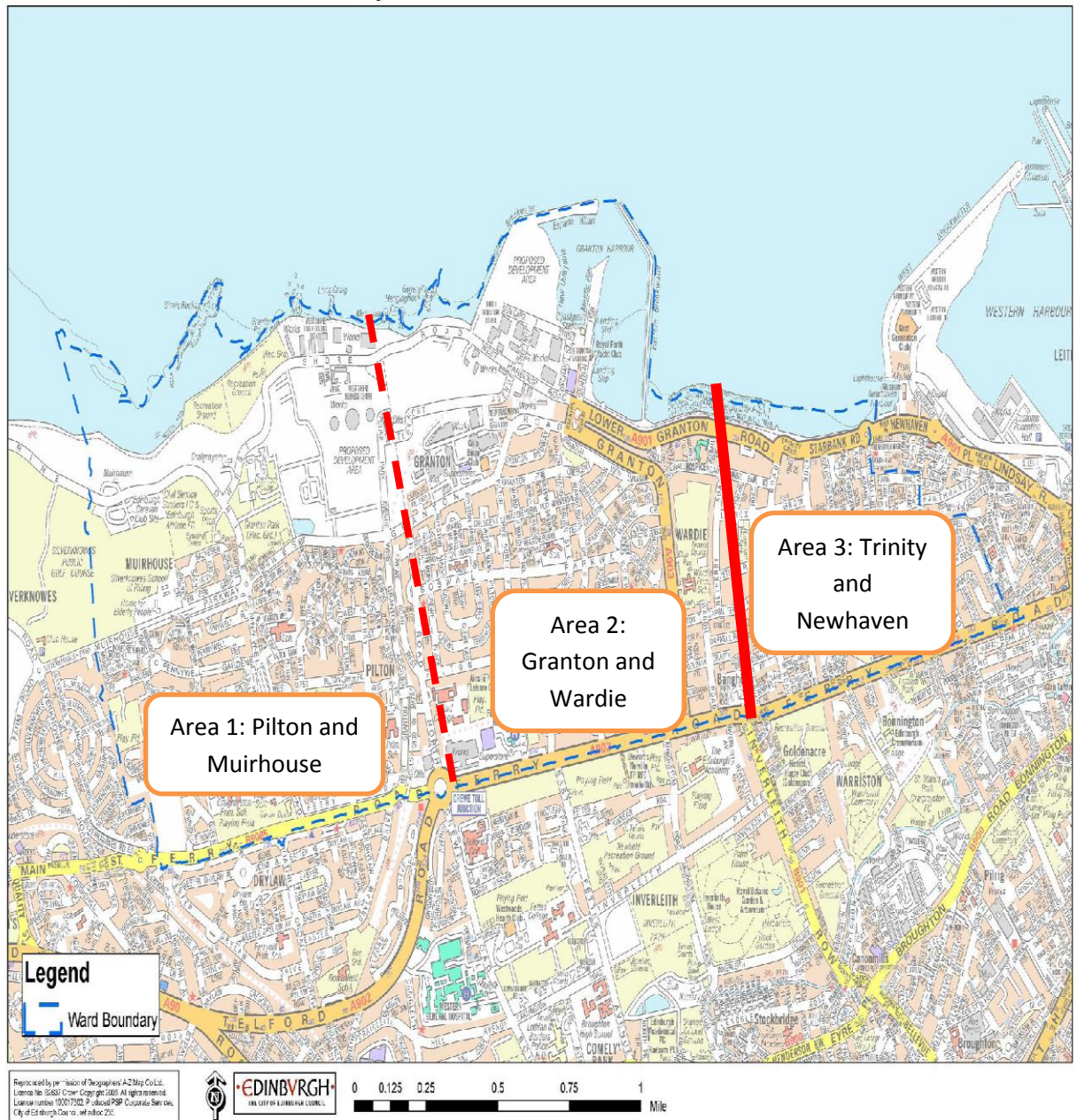
## Appendices

### Appendix One – Forth Ward maps



Source: Adapted from The City of Edinburgh Council (2014)

## Ward 4 Forth Ward Effective From May 2007

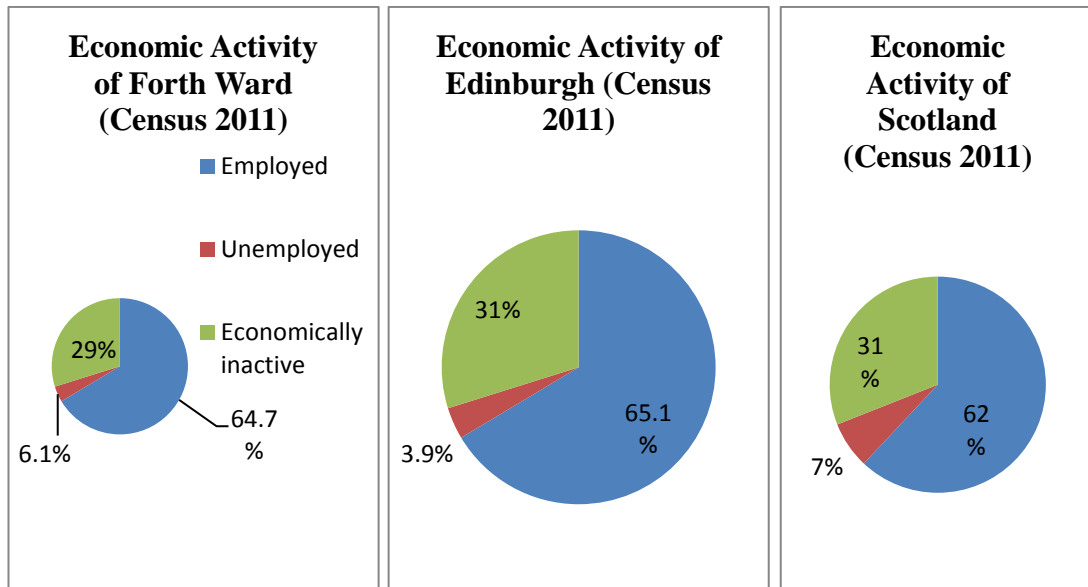


Source: Adapted from The City of Edinburgh Council (2014)

- Area 1 and Area 2 showing very similar characteristics in interview findings
- Area 3 showing very different characteristics (as opposed to Area 1 and Area 2) in interview findings

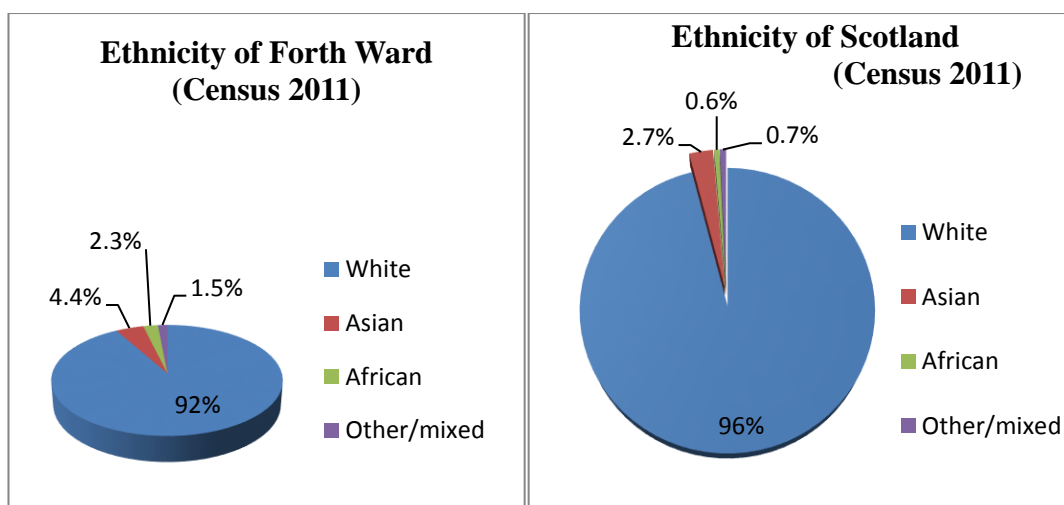
## Appendix Two – Diagrams on Forth Ward

### Economic activity of Forth Ward, Edinburgh and Scotland



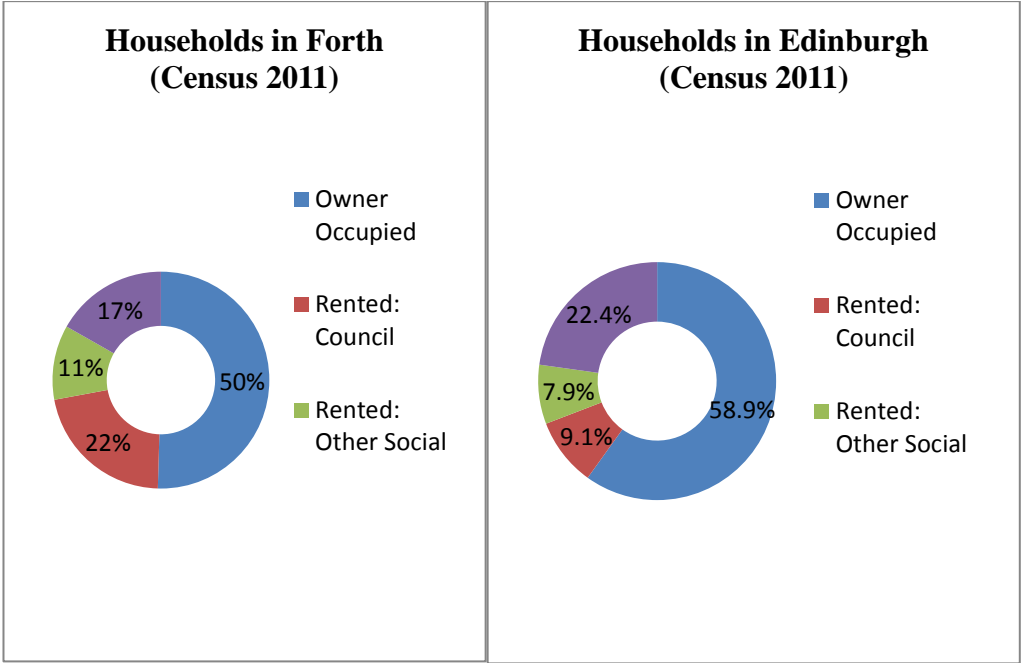
Similarly, the SIMD (2012) reports that 28 per cent of Forth Ward's population is income deprived (which is higher than the city level).

### Ethnicity of Forth Ward and Scotland



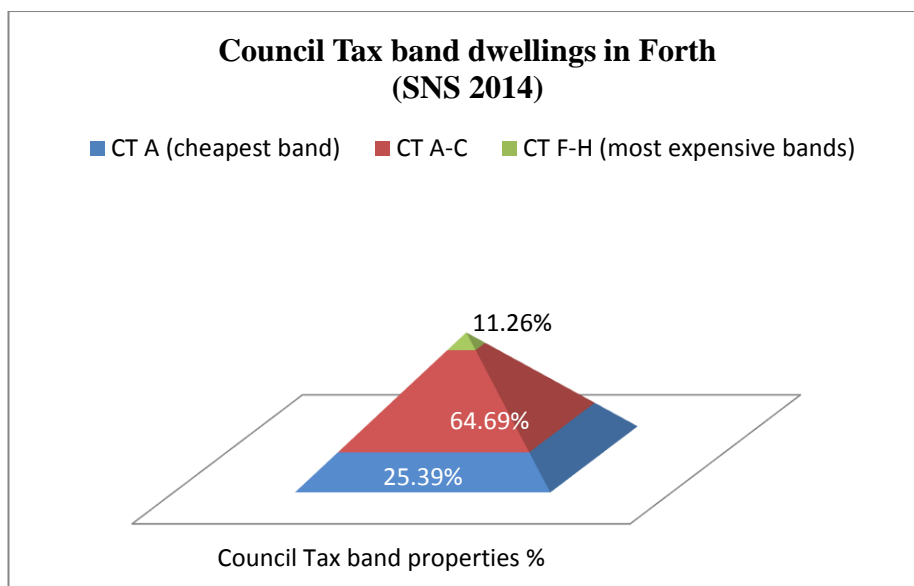
Forth's figures show a slight increase in all the different minority ethnicities compared to Scotland as a whole (Census 2011).

**Households in Forth Ward and Edinburgh**



Half of the ward's dwellings are owner-occupied, which is less than Edinburgh as a whole (Census 2011). 33 per cent of the ward live in social housing (council and other) compared to only 17 per cent in Edinburgh as a whole (Census 2011).

## Council Tax band dwellings in Forth



Most houses are in the average range in terms of council tax banding. While a quarter of the dwellings are in the cheapest band just over 11 per cent of the housing in the ward belongs to the most expensive band (SNS 2014). The cheapest council tax bands can be found primarily within Muirhouse and Pilton, though there are some scattered across Granton as well (SNS 2014).



## **Appendix Three – Performance measurement in Scotland**

This section looks into the development of performance within the Scottish public domain. Scottish reforms that influence how public performance is undertaken within the country are also explored.

### **Best Value**

Best Value (BV) provides the framework for continuous improvement in public services and thus is a key element of the Scottish Government's Public Service Reform agenda (Audit Scotland 2007; Scottish Government 2011b; Mackie 2013). One way to analyse and evaluate the performance of local authorities is through BV auditing. In Scottish local government a statutory framework was introduced in 2003 in order to ensure quality and value for money services (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; Audit Scotland 2013b). Accordingly, it is the duty of the local authority to continuously improve its service performance while finding a balance between keeping costs low and maintaining quality (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; Scott 2008; Scottish Government 2011b). This step is crucial for saving taxpayers' money while ensuring that provided services have high standards. The BV inspection is carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission. BV is underpinned by the three Es: economy, effectiveness and efficiency within the public service environment (Scottish Government 2011b). As a result public organisations are obliged to display their BV practices in the following operational areas (Scottish Government 2011b):

- Commitment and Leadership
- Sound Governance at a Strategic and Operational Level
- Accountability
- Sound Management of Resources

- Responsiveness and Consultation
- Use of Review and Options Appraisal
- A Contribution to Sustainable Development
- Equal Opportunities Arrangements
- Joint Working.

All these operations and their BV have to be aligned with and support the public organisation's priorities.

### **National Performance Framework**

The importance of performance came to the forefront with the SNP government elected in 2007 (Carpenter 2007). It set out its main aim of sustainable economic growth, for which performance improvement is vital within the public sector for it to reach its full potential and so to benefit the country for the long-term (Jamieson 2007; Scottish Government 2007a). The intention of the National Performance Framework (NPF) is to align the public sector and work in partnership to achieve the Government's Purpose and National Outcomes. The whole of government was to adapt to an outcomes-focused approach to performance (Audit Scotland 2007; Scottish Government 2007a; Campbell 2012).

For this a new performance framework, the NPF was created in 2007 which sets out the 16 national outcomes that will demonstrate progress towards the purpose and also the five strategic objectives that are the focus for the Scottish government's actions (Mackie 2008, 2013). All in all it is made up of:

- one overall purpose (which is the government's purpose)
- 8 purpose targets (supporting the achievement of the purpose)



- five strategic objectives (these identify the focus of the government)
- 16 national outcomes
- 55 national indicators (that make it possible to see the developments made towards achieving the outcomes and addressing the overall purpose) (Campbell 2012; Mackie 2013; Scottish Government 2016).

The NPF has been in operation since 2007 and while it was slightly refreshed in 2011 the latest 2016 version has no structural changes (Scottish Government 2016). See the NPF below.

## NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### THE GOVERNMENT'S PURPOSE

To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth

### HIGH LEVEL TARGETS RELATING TO THE PURPOSE

Growth Productivity Participation Population Solidarity Cohesion Sustainability

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

		WEALTHIER & FAIRER	SMARTER	HEALTHIER	SAFER & STRONGER	GREENER		
NATIONAL OUTCOMES		We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe						NATIONAL OUTCOMES
		We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people						
		We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation						
		Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens						
		Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed						
		We live longer, healthier lives						
		We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society						
		We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk						
		We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger						
		We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need						
		We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others						
		We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations						
		We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity						
		We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production						
		Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it						
		Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs						

### HOW ARE WE DOING?

Visit [www.scotlandperforms.com](http://www.scotlandperforms.com)  
to track latest progress

March 2016

Source: Scottish Government (2016)

## National Performance Framework – Measurement Set

Increase Scotland's Economic Growth		Improve Productivity	Improve Economic Participation	Increase Population Growth
PURPOSE TARGETS				
Population – Increase Healthy Life Expectancy		Solidarity – Reduce Income Inequality	Cohesion – Reduce Inequalities in Economic Participation across Scotland	Sustainability – Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
NATIONAL INDICATORS	Increase the number of businesses		Improve the quality of healthcare experience	NATIONAL INDICATORS
	Increase exports		Reduce the percentage of adults who smoke	
	Improve digital infrastructure		Reduce alcohol related hospital admissions	
	Reduce traffic congestion		Reduce the number of individuals with problem drug use	
	Improve Scotland's reputation		Improve people's perceptions about the crime rate in their area	
	Increase research and development spending		Reduce reconviction rates	
	Improve knowledge exchange from university research		Reduce crime victimisation rates	
	Improve the skill profile of the population		Reduce deaths on Scotland's roads	
	Reduce underemployment		Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services	
	Reduce the proportion of employees earning less than the Living Wage		Improve the responsiveness of public services	
	Reduce the pay gap		Reduce the proportion of individuals living in poverty	
	Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection report		Reduce children's deprivation	
	Increase the proportion of schools receiving positive inspection reports		Improve access to suitable housing options for those in housing need	
	Improve levels of educational attainment		Increase the number of new homes	
	Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work		Widen use of the Internet	
	Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations		Improve people's perceptions of their neighbourhood	
	Improve children's services		Increase cultural engagement	
	Improve children's dental health		Improve the state of Scotland's historic sites	
	Increase the proportion of babies with a healthy birth weight		Improve access to local greenspace	
	Increase the proportion of healthy weight children		Increase people's use of Scotland's outdoors	
	Increase physical activity		Improve the condition of protected nature sites	
	Improve self-assessed general health		Increase the abundance of terrestrial breeding birds: biodiversity	
	Improve mental wellbeing		Increase natural capital	
	Reduce premature mortality		Improve the state of Scotland's marine environment	
	Improve end of life care		Reduce Scotland's carbon footprint	
	Improve support for people with care needs		Increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public or active transport	
	Reduce emergency admissions to hospital		Reduce waste generated	
			Increase renewable electricity production	

Visit [www.scotlandperforms.com](http://www.scotlandperforms.com) to track latest progress

March 2016

Source: Scottish Government (2016)

In 2008 the website Scotland Performs was launched by the government which provides information on how Scotland performs against the NPF indicators (Scottish Government 2008; Mackie 2008, 2013). This is meant to be an easy way to reveal and track the performance of government and the public sector in Scotland (Campbell 2012). However only NHS Scotland as an external (i.e. not part of the government) public sector organisation has signed up to share its performance through the Scotland Performs website (Scottish Government 2008; Mackie 2013).

The introduction of the NPF follows the worldwide trend of recent years. The rationale is that input focus is not fruitful since the government is preoccupied with following procedures rather than focusing on the benefits it achieves (Scott 2011b; Campbell 2012; Mackie 2013). On the other hand there are external factors that cannot be controlled by the government that affect performance (e.g. world economy) (Campbell 2012) and not everything can be easily measured, as in the case of complex services (Seddon 2008; Talbot 2010).

The Government's Purpose includes the statement on providing "opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish" which is especially important for this research (see NPF, p.296). Furthermore one of the strategic objectives of the NPF is "Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs" (see NPF, p.296). Such a declaration has great importance for this research which sets out to discover how this objective manifests itself at ward level in public service provision. Underpinning this strategic objective are the national indicators and targets which in the case of the relevant objective include to "improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered" and to "improve the responsiveness of public services" (see NPF, p.297). There are also indicators on reducing adult literacy and numeracy problems and increasing life expectancy in deprived areas. References to these issues can be expected to arise during the data collection of this research particularly with local managers and policy makers.

The Scottish Budget Spending Review 2007 (Scottish Government 2007a) was a key document for public service reform in local authorities as it set outcomes that the central government expected local governments to meet. Local government is expected to delivery on the national Strategic Objectives, outcomes, indicators and

targets, supporting the Scottish Government in delivering its Purpose (Scottish Government (2007a)).

### **SNP Government and the Four Pillars**

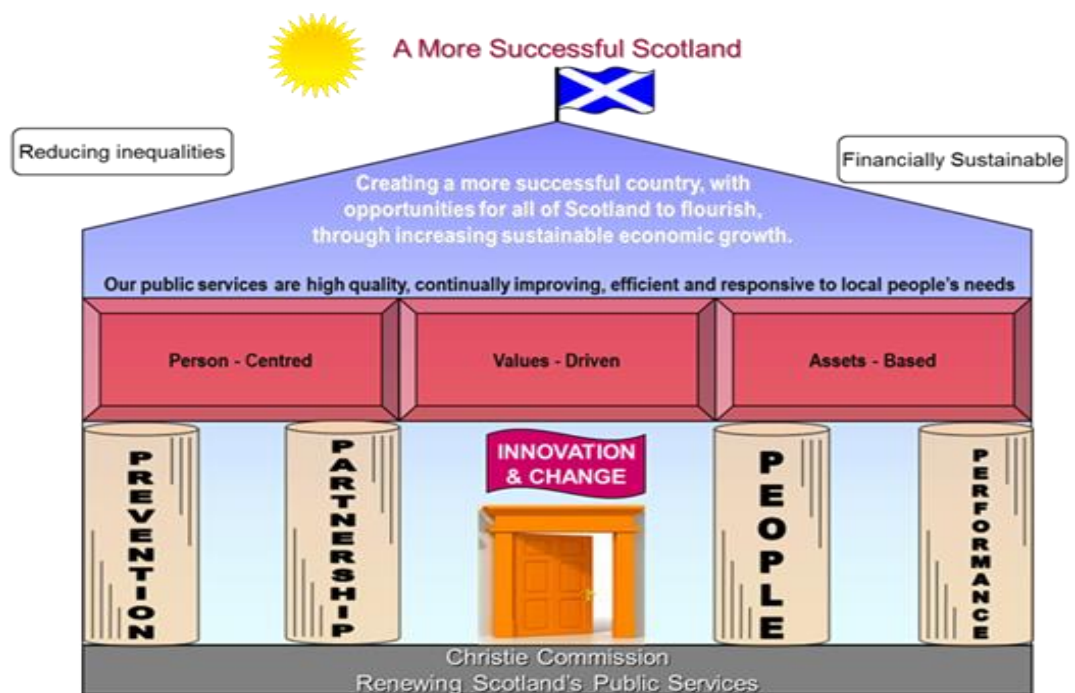
With the 2011 Holyrood elections, for the first time since Scottish devolution a majority SNP government was formed. This government, based on the Christie (2011) Commission, set out the four key pillars of public service reform on which to build governance. These pillars are: prevention, partnership work, people (employees' development) and performance management (Scott 2011b; SNP 2011; Mair 2012; Accounts Commission 2012; Scottish Government 2014b). These four pillars are trusted to bring sustainability, better resource usage and results for public services particularly when the challenge is to deliver improved outcomes with limited resources (Scottish Government 2014b).

### **The importance of the Four Pillars**

The four pillars:	Explanation:
Prevention	With ever increasing demand, prevention is needed to make sure services are sustainably delivered and tackle intergenerational inequalities. Gathering evidence is vital to establish initiatives and observe their impacts (Scott 2011b). Tackling problems as they arise reduces future problems (Scottish Government 2014b).
Partnership:	In order to deliver improved outcomes and ensure resources are used better, local services need to be planned and delivered in partnership. Often the effective solutions are found locally (Scott

	2011b).
People:	The skills of the workforce need to be used for their full potential. Leadership is key to manage change and uncertainty (Scott 2011b; Scottish Government 2014b).
Performance:	The role of performance is to ensure public money is spent wisely in order to achieve better outcomes and improve value for money. Effective performance management skills are needed to understand and manage data. Distributing information and involving workers and the public is essential for improvements in the field (Scott 2011b).

### The government's vision of the Four Pillars



Source: Scottish Government (2014d)



The four pillars aim to provide a clear direction for the government and councils to follow (Accounts Commission 2012). At the same time a sense of simplifying processes within the sector is prominent. The application of the four pillars to areas like Forth Ward is to reduce existing inequalities while providing sustainable services (Cairney 2011; Cairney and St Denny 2015). They highlight the importance of delivering public services in accordance with the needs of local people.

## Appendix Four – Information sheet



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

### **Information Sheet for Potential Participants:**

My name is Violetta Rozsa Fejszes and I am a PhD research student from the School of Business at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. As part of my research studies, I am undertaking a research project for my PhD.

The title of my project is: NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL SERVICES: A CASE STUDY IN FORTH WARD, EDINBURGH

This study is looking into how social services are provided and their performance within Forth Ward especially during the current economic climate while also investigating which social services are the most in demand of the area.

The findings of the project will be useful because it can help to learn from the area and its needs meanwhile the findings could potentially be applied to other similar localities. Nevertheless the research can help in the future delivery of such services within Forth Ward. [This research is being funded by Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.]

I am looking for local service users, professionals within social services of Forth ward also politicians and local representatives (community councillors, local councillors, etc.) to participate in the project.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be interviewed in your settings (workplace, office) which will last no longer than 60 minutes. The researcher is not aware of any risks associated with taking part in the project. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any stage and you would not have to give a reason.

All data will be anonymised as much as possible, but you may be identifiable from tape recordings of your voice. Your name will be replaced with a participant number, and it will not be possible for you to be identified in any reporting of the data gathered.

The results will help form the PhD dissertation and also may be published in a journal or presented at a conference.

If you would like to contact an independent person, who knows about this project but is not involved in it, you are welcome to contact Professor Andy Frew (Lecturer). His contact details are given below.



If you have read and understood this information sheet, any questions you had have been answered, and you would like to be a participant in the study, please now see the consent form.

Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Violetta Rozsa Fejszes

Address: PhD Research Student,  
Arts, Social Sciences and Management  
Business School  
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh  
Queen Margaret University Drive  
Musselburgh  
East Lothian EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone: [VFejszes@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:VFejszes@qmu.ac.uk) / 0131 474 0000

Contact details of the independent adviser (note that the independent adviser cannot be a member of your supervisory team)

Name of adviser: Professor Andy Frew

Address: Arts, Social Sciences and Management, Business School  
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh  
Queen Margaret University Drive  
Musselburgh  
East Lothian EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone: [afrew@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:afrew@qmu.ac.uk) / 0131 474 0000

## Appendix Five – Consent form



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

### Consent Form

#### **NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL SERVICES:**

#### **A CASE STUDY IN FORTH WARD, EDINBURGH**

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving any reason.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Violetta Rozsa Fejszes [VFejszes@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:VFejszes@qmu.ac.uk)

Address: PhD Research Student,  
Arts, Social Sciences and Management  
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh  
Queen Margaret University Drive  
Musselburgh  
East Lothian EH21 6UU

## **Appendix Six – General interview themes and questions**

### **Public service users, local residents:**

**-Could you introduce the area to me? What kind of area is this?**

-What could be done to improve the area?

-How could people be made less reliant on council-provided services?

**-In your experience which public services are in demand in this area? Why?**

-Why are community education services important?

-How important are services for you?

-What is your experience of public services in the locality?

-Which public services do you use?

-How satisfied are you as user? What could be done better?

-What challenges do services have?

-What do you do if you are not happy with a provided service you receive?

**-How able do you feel to have a say on local issues and services?**

-How able do you feel to influence decisions?

-Do you attend local meetings? Do you participate? Why?

-What do you think of the local CC and NP?

-Do you feel informed about your service and what it does?

-Do you vote? Why?

-Do you feel in the centre of service provision?

**-What is your view on service performance?**

-What do you think of service targets?

-In your view, is performance important within local services to measure how they are doing?

**-How does The City of Edinburgh Council understand this area and its needs?**

-In your view, are services equally delivered within the city? Is the quality of public services the same everywhere in Edinburgh?

**-How well do you think local representatives (councillors and politicians) understand the area and the needs of the locals?**

-Do you know who your local councillors are? MPs and MSPs?

-How easy is it to approach them?

-With what matter would you visit them?

**-Have you noticed how the current credit crunch has affected community education services?**

**-What future do you see for the area and its services?**

**Public service managers:**

**-Could you introduce the area to me?**

- Since you have been in your role, have you noticed any changes in the needs of the community?
- How empowered are residents in relation to the ward's local services?
- How could the area be improved?
- What local public services are in the most demand?
- In your view, how do these "in demand" services perform?

**-How well does The City of Edinburgh Council understand the needs of Forth Ward?**

- Does the ward have any say or power in what it gets from the council?
- What do you think of the local CC and NP?

**-What does your service have to offer to the community?**

- What are the attitudes of your local service users?
- Is your service centred on the service users?
- What challenges does your provided service face?

**-Has the current economic climate affected your organisation? How?**

**-What is your general view about performance measurement?**

- How important is performance for your organisation?
- Could you talk me through your performance measurement process? (i.e. how you measure and report performance)
- What is the purpose of measuring performance?

-What is your view on efficiency, effectiveness and economy, the three Es?

-How important are targets for you? Who sets the targets?

-What do you think of performance indicators?

-Who uses the data? What happens to it?

-How important is performance for CEC?

-What characteristics of services are measured?

-What measures are you able to take to improve your service? How empowered are you in your role as manager?

-How can local services such as yours demonstrate that they deliver quality services?

**-What future do you see for your organisation within the ward?**

-What is the future of local community education services in Forth?

-Are you worried about the future of local public services?

-How do you see the area in 10 years' time?

**Policy-making community:**

**-What do you identify Forth Ward as a place to be like?**

- How can you contribute to the life of the ward?
- What kind of matters do locals approach you with the most?
- What local public services do they need and use the most?
- Are services centred on the service users? How is the quality of local services?
- How do these public services perform in the ward? What is your view of them?
- Do they meet the needs of the community? Are they effective efficient, economic
- What challenges do services face in the ward?
- Is there anything needed to be done to improve these services?

**-Does the ward have any say and power in what it gets from the council or does it implement what the local authority determines?**

- Have the needs of the area changed since you have known the area?
- How empowered are Ward residents?
- What do you think of the local CC and NP?

**-What is your view on (the locals' identification of):**

- community education services
- locals not being aware of how the area performs
- locals not knowing who their local representatives are and what they do

-giving more power back to the locality as most people feel overlooked

**-How is performance of local public services measured? What is your view of the process?**

-Who uses the data? What happens to it?

-How important is performance for CEC?

-What characteristics of services are measured? How important are targets?

-What is your view of performance indicators?

-Why do you think local government has not signed up to the NPF?

**-What future do you see for public services in Forth Ward?**

-What future do you see for the ward?



**Appendix Seven – Sample of NVivo interview entries representing some of the interviewees**

Name	Nodes	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
C DM550158 Local Councillor C1	19	39	29/01/2014 16:35	VF	04/04/2014 15:24	VF
C VN860012 Local councillor C2	27	42	04/02/2014 17:06	VF	04/04/2014 15:24	VF
C VN860016 Local Councillor C3	15	30	09/02/2014 18:10	VF	04/04/2014 15:24	VF
Gr + DM550128 Gr mgr Gm2	25	35	19/03/2014 21:30	VF	04/04/2014 15:01	VF
Gr + DM550143 Gr Activist Ga3	31	50	19/03/2014 21:30	VF	04/04/2014 15:01	VF
Gr + DM550149 Gr manager Gm3	16	20	28/03/2014 14:24	VF	19/09/2014 15:46	VF
Gr +DM550131 Granton mgr Gm5	19	21	04/04/2014 17:18	VF	04/04/2014 17:18	VF
Gr +DM550138 Granton Mgr Gm4	16	23	28/03/2014 14:24	VF	04/04/2014 15:12	VF
Gr +DM550147 Gr activist Ga4	26	31	28/03/2014 14:24	VF	04/04/2014 15:15	VF
Gr DM550101 Granton G1	32	55	07/02/2014 13:09	VF	04/04/2014 15:01	VF
Gr DM550111 Granton G2	37	70	24/01/2014 15:19	VF	04/04/2014 15:02	VF
Gr DM550119+20+21 Granton G3	37	78	07/02/2014 16:19	VF	04/04/2014 15:02	VF
Gr DM550132 Granton G4	13	21	26/01/2014 19:44	VF	04/04/2014 15:02	VF
Gr DM550142- Granton and District Comm Council Ga5	8	12	04/04/2014 15:17	VF	04/04/2014 17:19	VF
Gr DM550159 Granton activist Ga1	27	30	26/01/2014 20:04	VF	04/04/2014 15:03	VF
Gr VN860009 Granton teacher Gm1	13	33	27/01/2014 16:09	VF	04/04/2014 15:03	VF
Gr VN860010 Comm activist Granton Ga2	22	34	02/02/2014 14:35	VF	04/04/2014 15:03	VF
P DM550095 mgr M Pp1	32	62	30/01/2014 15:25	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550097 Pilton Pf1	31	49	21/01/2014 17:06	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550100 Pilton Pf2	35	60	06/02/2014 15:26	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550102 P Mgr Pp2	28	67	31/01/2014 19:42	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550103 Pilton Pf3	27	41	23/01/2014 15:17	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550109+DM550110 priest Pm1	27	52	23/01/2014 17:10	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550115+116+117+118 Pilton Pf4	37	77	26/01/2014 18:18	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550126 Pilton Pm2	29	44	21/01/2014 22:26	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550127 Pilton Pm3	36	54	24/01/2014 13:06	VF	04/04/2014 15:21	VF
P DM550130 Pilton priest Pm4	42	58	10/12/2013 19:06	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550135 Muirhouse Pf5	38	49	24/01/2014 18:13	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550136+137 P mgr Pp3	35	68	31/01/2014 15:03	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550141 Pilton Activist Pf6	28	46	28/01/2014 19:35	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550144 WP&WG CC Pf9	22	34	28/01/2014 20:20	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550146 P priest Pf7	33	54	07/02/2014 18:36	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF

P DM550151 Pilton Pm5	32	55	16/12/2013 14:31	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550153 school Pilton Pf8	20	30	26/01/2014 17:09	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P DM550156+157 P local GP Pp4	13	34	31/01/2014 17:31	VF	04/04/2014 15:22	VF
P council Pp5	6	8	14/02/2014 17:29	VF	04/04/2014 15:23	VF
Tr + DM550139 Trinity T1	24	29	04/04/2014 14:56	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr +DM550096 Trinity T2	35	39	04/04/2014 14:56	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr +DM550112+113 trinity T3	34	46	19/03/2014 21:30	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr A Trinity T4	2	3	02/03/2014 15:13	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr DM550092 Trinity T5	28	39	05/02/2014 15:26	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr DM550093 Trinity T6	38	70	05/02/2014 16:06	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr DM550094 Trinity T7	34	41	16/04/2014 20:08	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr DM550104+105+106 Trinity T8	35	60	16/04/2014 22:04	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Tr VN860017 Trinity CC Ta	28	50	04/02/2014 17:51	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
Trinity School teacher Tm	1	1	17/04/2014 15:21	VF	17/04/2014 17:16	VF
VN860008 MP P1	16	22	28/01/2014 15:29	VF	28/02/2014 15:08	VF
VN860011 MSP P2	20	26	28/01/2014 14:11	VF	28/02/2014 15:08	VF
VN860013 MSP P3	21	35	13/02/2014 16:17	VF	28/02/2014 15:08	VF
VN860014+15 Audit Scotland officer AS	11	31	09/02/2014 15:17	VF	27/04/2014 14:04	VF

## Appendix Eight – Sample of main NVivo headlines for themes

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Edinburgh Council	24	45	16/12/2013 16:35	VF	23/05/2014 21:01	VF
Forth Ward	15	21	13/12/2013 21:08	VF	07/05/2014 17:20	VF
General performance measurement in public sector	8	13	16/12/2013 19:26	VF	13/02/2014 17:01	VF
GRANTON	7	9	24/01/2014 15:31	VF	08/04/2014 19:49	VF
Independent Scotland	10	15	16/12/2013 18:52	VF	24/03/2014 16:12	VF
Making people less reliant on public services	19	29	13/12/2013 21:03	VF	21/05/2014 17:24	VF
Memorable quotes	10	11	13/12/2013 21:07	VF	06/05/2014 20:01	VF
PILTON	11	14	10/12/2013 19:09	VF	24/01/2014 15:53	VF
TRINITY	6	9	03/02/2014 16:11	VF	16/04/2014 21:27	VF

## Appendix Nine - NVivo extract of the topics topics emerging within the interviews, under the main theme

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Create d By	Modified On	Modifie d By
Edinburgh Council	24	45	16/12/2013 16:35	VF	23/05/2014 21:01	VF
Bureaucracy or and record keeping within their provided services	5	8	26/01/2014 17:59	VF	04/04/2014 19:53	VF
Empowerment of public service staff	3	3	26/01/2014 18:05	VF	31/01/2014 22:00	VF
funds and their cuts	4	6	05/02/2014 16:22	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
not spending money	3	3	16/12/2013 19:03	VF	09/02/2014 18:43	VF
Performance	2	3	04/02/2014 17:46	VF	09/02/2014 17:35	VF
Services are same all over Edinburgh	17	20	23/01/2014 18:21	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
wasting money	9	11	16/12/2013 18:47	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Forth Ward	15	21	13/12/2013 21:08	VF	07/05/2014 17:20	VF
Big challenges for Forth's local services	4	6	28/01/2014 14:12	VF	04/02/2014 17:44	VF
Cuts and their impacts	2	3	28/01/2014 15:40	VF	29/01/2014 16:47	VF
Constituency overview	7	16	28/01/2014 14:16	VF	14/02/2014 17:44	VF
Does Forth differ from the rest of the constituency	3	3	28/01/2014 14:59	VF	13/02/2014 16:19	VF
How vocal is the ward	5	9	28/01/2014 15:06	VF	13/02/2014 16:20	VF
Are locals satisfied with the services	5	7	28/01/2014 15:50	VF	09/02/2014 18:42	VF
Do people want to be the judges of local public services	1	1	28/01/2014 15:08	VF	28/01/2014 15:08	VF
What issues do locals turn to you with	4	5	28/01/2014 15:38	VF	13/02/2014 16:19	VF
Plans to respond to the need of extra infrastructure	1	1	28/01/2014 15:11	VF	28/01/2014 15:12	VF
Representing a diverse ward	1	2	29/01/2014 17:44	VF	29/01/2014 17:47	VF
How is it to represent Trinity	3	3	28/01/2014 15:16	VF	09/02/2014 18:35	VF
Edinburgh Council understanding Forth	38	57	13/12/2013 21:09	VF	20/05/2014 21:59	VF
Government understanding areas like Forth	4	6	28/01/2014 14:53	VF	14/02/2014 17:43	VF
Forth's power or Edinburgh Council	32	45	13/12/2013 21:11	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Generalisability of Forth Ward	1	1	09/02/2014 18:36	VF	09/02/2014 18:37	VF
Its most important and used public services	3	3	28/01/2014 15:04	VF	09/02/2014 18:29	VF
Its past and future	4	7	28/01/2014 14:22	VF	09/02/2014 18:44	VF
Neighbourhood Partnership	13	27	26/01/2014 20:28	VF	16/04/2014 20:25	VF
CCs	5	7	28/01/2014 14:31	VF	09/02/2014 18:33	VF
initiatives in the area	1	2	04/02/2014 17:27	VF	04/02/2014 17:28	VF
Unemployed generations	10	15	13/12/2013 21:50	VF	24/03/2014 14:02	VF
General performance measurement in public sector	8	13	16/12/2013 19:26	VF	13/02/2014 17:01	VF

Audit Scotland	1	5	09/02/2014 15:18	VF	09/02/2014 17:34	VF
Accounts Commission	1	4	09/02/2014 15:31	VF	09/02/2014 17:33	VF
Auditor General	1	2	09/02/2014 15:26	VF	09/02/2014 17:01	VF
Best Value Audit	1	3	09/02/2014 17:40	VF	09/02/2014 17:45	VF
Community Planning Partnership	1	3	09/02/2014 17:00	VF	09/02/2014 17:19	VF
Local Government Performance	1	1	09/02/2014 17:04	VF	09/02/2014 17:05	VF
local authorities	2	5	09/02/2014 17:05	VF	13/02/2014 16:59	VF
Key Performance Indicators	1	5	09/02/2014 17:38	VF	09/02/2014 17:45	VF
Parliament's role in performance measurement	4	7	28/01/2014 14:56	VF	13/02/2014 17:00	VF
National Performance Framework	2	2	28/01/2014 15:09	VF	13/02/2014 16:57	VF
Public sector increasing demand and delivery	1	1	28/01/2014 15:45	VF	28/01/2014 15:47	VF
GRANTON	7	9	24/01/2014 15:31	VF	08/04/2014 19:49	VF
Community Council	9	13	24/01/2014 16:02	VF	08/04/2014 19:55	VF
Current problems	5	8	24/01/2014 15:34	VF	04/04/2014 19:32	VF
dog fouling	4	4	24/01/2014 16:22	VF	08/04/2014 16:18	VF
Kids	3	5	24/01/2014 15:34	VF	04/04/2014 19:30	VF
Feeling forgotten as an area	1	1	24/01/2014 16:07	VF	24/03/2014 13:42	VF
Future	12	20	24/01/2014 16:02	VF	08/04/2014 20:02	VF
General satisfaction	9	16	24/01/2014 15:36	VF	08/04/2014 16:19	VF
General view on the area	13	28	24/01/2014 16:05	VF	08/04/2014 19:48	VF
teacher's view on the area and its issues	1	11	27/01/2014 16:11	VF	28/01/2014 13:39	VF
Local councillors their power and knowing them	12	18	24/01/2014 16:03	VF	08/04/2014 20:02	VF
comments to local councillors	2	2	24/01/2014 16:04	VF	07/02/2014 13:49	VF
issues you would see them with	3	3	24/01/2014 16:03	VF	24/03/2014 16:15	VF
Parks	6	7	24/01/2014 15:36	VF	04/04/2014 19:23	VF
Performance of local public services	5	5	24/01/2014 15:47	VF	24/04/2014 22:20	VF
Edinburgh Council services performance measurement and monitoring	4	7	24/01/2014 15:59	VF	24/04/2014 22:19	VF
Managers managing local public services and performance	6	10	24/01/2014 15:59	VF	24/04/2014 22:19	VF
Credit crunch and local public services	12	19	24/01/2014 16:00	VF	08/04/2014 19:59	VF
Other challenges facing local public services	3	3	24/01/2014 16:00	VF	08/04/2014 16:32	VF
Is it important for the council to know how they deliver	2	3	24/01/2014 15:58	VF	24/04/2014 22:19	VF
Is performance important	2	3	24/01/2014 16:01	VF	24/04/2014 22:19	VF
Raising voice	8	12	24/01/2014 15:48	VF	03/06/2014 22:04	VF
Been asked on your views	3	5	24/01/2014 15:54	VF	03/06/2014 22:04	VF
How informed are you	6	9	24/01/2014 15:52	VF	03/06/2014 22:04	VF
local newspaper	1	2	24/01/2014 15:52	VF	04/04/2014 17:28	VF

Local meetings	6	8	24/01/201 4 15:50	VF	03/06/201 4 22:04	VF
MPs	1	1	24/01/201 4 15:49	VF	07/02/201 4 13:27	VF
voting	5	8	24/01/201 4 15:54	VF	03/06/201 4 22:04	VF
Your voice counts	7	9	24/01/201 4 15:49	VF	03/06/201 4 22:04	VF
Targets	9	11	24/01/201 4 15:56	VF	08/04/201 4 19:59	VF
would you want to know	2	3	24/01/201 4 15:56	VF	07/02/201 4 17:04	VF
public services and what used the most	9	22	24/01/201 4 15:39	VF	08/04/201 4 19:50	VF
advice centre	1	1	08/04/201 4 16:07	VF	08/04/201 4 16:08	VF
Being in the centre of local public services	7	9	24/01/201 4 15:46	VF	04/04/201 4 19:44	VF
Buses	8	14	24/01/201 4 15:40	VF	08/04/201 4 16:18	VF
Closures	1	1	24/01/201 4 15:43	VF	09/02/201 4 18:26	VF
community centres	9	19	24/01/201 4 15:41	VF	08/04/201 4 19:58	VF
leisure centres	4	7	02/02/201 4 15:33	VF	04/04/201 4 19:22	VF
Doctors	4	7	24/01/201 4 15:41	VF	04/04/201 4 19:45	VF
education - primary	4	11	24/01/201 4 15:43	VF	04/04/201 4 17:25	VF
Housing	10	20	24/01/201 4 15:43	VF	08/04/201 4 19:47	VF
housing repair	2	7	24/01/201 4 15:44	VF	24/03/201 4 13:46	VF
housing tenants	2	2	24/01/201 4 15:45	VF	07/02/201 4 13:23	VF
Importance of local public services	5	5	24/01/201 4 15:45	VF	04/04/201 4 19:50	VF
Library	5	8	24/01/201 4 15:46	VF	08/04/201 4 19:50	VF
local initiatives	4	4	24/01/201 4 15:41	VF	08/04/201 4 16:16	VF
importance of charities	2	2	24/01/201 4 15:42	VF	04/04/201 4 17:37	VF
police and public safety	4	6	24/01/201 4 15:46	VF	08/04/201 4 19:49	VF
rubbish collection	4	5	24/01/201 4 15:40	VF	24/03/201 4 14:00	VF
Recycling	1	3	24/01/201 4 15:40	VF	07/02/201 4 17:17	VF
Views on locals	2	3	24/01/201 4 15:33	VF	04/04/201 4 19:46	VF
What could improve	4	10	24/01/201 4 15:36	VF	08/04/201 4 19:52	VF
Initiatives that work on making the area better and change it	3	3	24/01/201 4 15:38	VF	08/04/201 4 16:25	VF
Why area doesn't get better and Stake in the community	3	6	24/01/201 4 15:37	VF	08/04/201 4 16:33	VF
Independent Scotland	10	15	16/12/201 3 18:52	VF	24/03/201 4 16:12	VF
Making people less reliant on public services	19	29	13/12/201 3 21:03	VF	21/05/201 4 17:24	VF
Local governments' budgets	3	3	28/01/201 4 14:52	VF	31/01/201 4 14:42	VF
Politicians and their current work-reforms	8	12	13/12/201 3 21:05	VF	13/02/201 4 16:50	VF
Work of local councillors	4	12	29/01/201 4 16:52	VF	14/02/201 4 17:34	VF
Representing the party or the locals	1	2	30/01/201 4 15:21	VF	30/01/201 4 15:23	VF
Memorable quotes	10	11	13/12/201 3 21:07	VF	06/05/201 4 20:01	VF

PILTON	0	0	10/12/201 3 19:09	VF	24/01/201 4 15:53	VF
Community Council	9	17	13/12/201 3 21:12	VF	07/02/201 4 19:04	VF
Current problems	9	16	10/12/201 3 21:16	VF	13/02/201 4 16:28	VF
fly tipping	2	4	16/12/201 3 14:57	VF	23/01/201 4 11:40	VF
local kids	10	17	13/12/201 3 20:48	VF	07/02/201 4 18:42	VF
stolen motorbikes	3	5	16/12/201 3 14:51	VF	06/02/201 4 15:40	VF
Feeling forgotten as an area	2	5	16/12/201 3 14:38	VF	24/01/201 4 14:31	VF
Future	18	32	13/12/201 3 21:00	VF	13/02/201 4 17:04	VF
General satisfaction	12	25	10/12/201 3 21:22	VF	07/02/201 4 18:54	VF
General view on the area	17	39	16/12/201 3 14:34	VF	13/02/201 4 17:02	VF
Stake in the community	4	4	16/12/201 3 14:36	VF	26/01/201 4 20:34	VF
Local councillors their power and knowing them	15	28	13/12/201 3 21:14	VF	07/02/201 4 19:13	VF
Comments to local councillors	7	8	21/01/201 4 18:18	VF	07/02/201 4 19:17	VF
Issues you would see them with	7	8	13/12/201 3 21:49	VF	06/02/201 4 16:12	VF
Parks	8	10	10/12/201 3 21:20	VF	07/02/201 4 18:48	VF
Performance of public services	8	17	13/12/201 3 19:49	VF	31/01/201 4 15:34	VF
Credit crunch and local services	16	27	13/12/201 3 20:59	VF	07/02/201 4 19:09	VF
Other challenges faced by the public sector	8	12	21/01/201 4 17:41	VF	06/02/201 4 15:38	VF
Edinburgh Council performance measuring and monitoring	8	13	13/12/201 3 20:56	VF	07/02/201 4 19:17	VF
Managers managing public performance	6	25	21/01/201 4 18:05	VF	31/01/201 4 22:07	VF
Audits	1	1	31/01/201 4 21:39	VF	31/01/201 4 21:40	VF
Is it important for council to know how they deliver	7	9	13/12/201 3 20:54	VF	06/02/201 4 16:00	VF
Is performance important	3	4	21/01/201 4 18:00	VF	31/01/201 4 21:56	VF
Raising voice	14	23	13/12/201 3 19:54	VF	07/02/201 4 19:04	VF
Been asked your views	10	12	13/12/201 3 20:25	VF	07/02/201 4 19:15	VF
How informed are you	9	15	13/12/201 3 20:03	VF	06/02/201 4 15:57	VF
local newspaper	6	6	13/12/201 3 20:04	VF	30/01/201 4 17:55	VF
Local meetings	11	19	13/12/201 3 19:59	VF	06/02/201 4 15:55	VF
meetings' achievement	2	2	13/12/201 3 20:01	VF	30/01/201 4 17:58	VF
MPs	1	1	13/12/201 3 19:58	VF	13/12/201 3 19:59	VF
Voting	10	14	16/12/201 3 19:11	VF	07/02/201 4 19:18	VF
Your voice count	15	19	13/12/201 3 19:56	VF	07/02/201 4 19:04	VF
Targets	16	33	13/12/201 3 20:51	VF	07/02/201 4 19:20	VF
would you want to know	5	5	13/12/201 3 20:52	VF	07/02/201 4 19:19	VF
public services and what used most	17	37	13/12/201 3 19:27	VF	13/02/201 4 16:31	VF
advice centres	3	7	26/01/201 4 19:23	VF	07/02/201 4 18:53	VF

Being in the centre of local public services	10	21	21/01/201 4 17:54	VF	07/02/201 4 19:18	VF
Buses	12	19	13/12/201 3 19:30	VF	07/02/201 4 18:53	VF
Closures	1	3	13/12/201 3 19:43	VF	13/12/201 3 19:46	VF
community centres	8	17	13/12/201 3 19:34	VF	07/02/201 4 19:09	VF
Doctors	11	26	13/12/201 3 19:32	VF	07/02/201 4 18:54	VF
extended surgery opening hours	1	1	31/01/201 4 18:04	VF	31/01/201 4 19:07	VF
education - primary	6	6	13/12/201 3 19:51	VF	31/01/201 4 21:14	VF
Telford College	1	1	31/01/201 4 15:21	VF	31/01/201 4 15:21	VF
Housing	16	28	16/12/201 3 14:43	VF	13/02/201 4 16:30	VF
housing repair	2	4	16/12/201 3 14:44	VF	06/02/201 4 15:36	VF
housing tenants	1	1	16/12/201 3 18:06	VF	16/12/201 3 18:12	VF
Importance of local public services	6	6	21/01/201 4 17:30	VF	06/02/201 4 15:36	VF
Library	4	5	23/01/201 4 11:37	VF	30/01/201 4 15:42	VF
local council office	1	4	31/01/201 4 15:24	VF	31/01/201 4 16:08	VF
local initiatives	7	12	13/12/201 3 19:36	VF	07/02/201 4 18:56	VF
Charities	7	15	13/12/201 3 20:44	VF	13/02/201 4 16:51	VF
police and public safety	8	13	23/01/201 4 11:35	VF	13/02/201 4 16:27	VF
roads and area maintenance	1	1	07/02/201 4 19:02	VF	07/02/201 4 19:02	VF
rubbish collection	5	7	13/12/201 3 19:31	VF	07/02/201 4 19:07	VF
Recycling	2	2	16/12/201 3 18:16	VF	26/01/201 4 19:21	VF
Teacher's perspective on the area and its issues	1	4	26/01/201 4 17:18	VF	26/01/201 4 18:02	VF
Views on locals	11	14	10/12/201 3 21:13	VF	13/02/201 4 16:53	VF
Drugs	2	4	16/12/201 3 18:50	VF	24/01/201 4 13:48	VF
What could improve	15	31	10/12/201 3 21:23	VF	07/02/201 4 19:08	VF
Initiatives that work on changing the area and its issues	10	23	21/01/201 4 18:16	VF	07/02/201 4 19:12	VF
Why area doesn't get better	11	16	13/12/201 3 19:47	VF	06/02/201 4 15:42	VF
TRINITY	2	3	03/02/201 4 16:11	VF	16/04/201 4 21:27	VF
being in the same ward as Pilton	5	10	05/02/201 4 16:50	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF
CC	2	11	04/02/201 4 17:03	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF
Current problems	3	5	03/02/201 4 16:12	VF	05/02/201 4 16:28	VF
Future	8	10	04/02/201 4 17:02	VF	17/04/201 4 15:04	VF
General satisfaction	6	7	03/02/201 4 16:12	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF
General view on the area	8	15	04/02/201 4 17:05	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF
Local councillors and power and knowing them	8	21	04/02/201 4 17:03	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF
comments to them	6	7	04/02/201 4 17:04	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF
issues you would go to them with	7	7	04/02/201 4 17:04	VF	25/04/201 4 21:43	VF



Parks	4	4	03/02/2014 16:12	VF	17/04/2014 14:56	VF
Performance of local services	6	8	03/02/2014 16:18	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Credit crunch and local public services	9	13	04/02/2014 17:01	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Other challenges for local services	3	8	04/02/2014 17:01	VF	17/04/2014 14:02	VF
Edi Council services performance measuring and monitoring	7	14	04/02/2014 17:00	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Managers managing public services	1	1	04/02/2014 17:00	VF	17/04/2014 15:23	VF
Is it important for council to know how they deliver	6	8	04/02/2014 16:59	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Is performance important	1	1	04/02/2014 17:02	VF	16/04/2014 20:24	VF
Raising voice	6	11	03/02/2014 16:19	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Been asked on your views	6	7	03/02/2014 16:20	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
How informed are you	8	11	03/02/2014 16:20	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Local meetings	7	10	03/02/2014 16:19	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Voting	7	8	03/02/2014 16:20	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Your voice counts	7	8	03/02/2014 16:19	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Targets	7	7	03/02/2014 16:22	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
would you want to know	4	5	03/02/2014 16:22	VF	17/04/2014 15:02	VF
public services and even their absence	6	8	03/02/2014 16:13	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Being in the centre of public services	6	10	03/02/2014 16:17	VF	17/04/2014 15:04	VF
Buses	7	11	03/02/2014 16:13	VF	17/04/2014 14:56	VF
community centres	3	3	03/02/2014 16:14	VF	16/04/2014 22:54	VF
leisure centres	2	2	03/02/2014 16:14	VF	17/04/2014 13:57	VF
Doctors	4	4	03/02/2014 16:14	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
education-primary	5	5	03/02/2014 16:16	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Nursery	1	1	04/02/2014 17:59	VF	04/02/2014 17:59	VF
Housing	0	0	03/02/2014 16:16	VF	03/02/2014 16:16	VF
Importance of local services	5	8	03/02/2014 16:16	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
Library	4	5	03/02/2014 16:18	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
local initiatives	0	0	03/02/2014 16:15	VF	03/02/2014 16:15	VF
Charities	3	3	03/02/2014 16:15	VF	17/04/2014 13:55	VF
police and public safety	6	9	03/02/2014 16:18	VF	17/04/2014 14:55	VF
road maintenance	4	5	05/02/2014 16:57	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
rubish collection	7	10	03/02/2014 16:14	VF	25/04/2014 21:43	VF
social work	3	4	04/02/2014 18:00	VF	16/04/2014 20:19	VF
tree maintenance	2	2	04/02/2014 17:32	VF	16/04/2014 22:54	VF
Views on locals	6	9	03/02/2014 16:12	VF	17/04/2014 13:56	VF
What could improve	5	9	03/02/2014 16:13	VF	16/04/2014 21:36	VF

## Appendix Ten – Author publications

Fejszes, V.R. 2012. *New Public Management and Organisational Performance in Social Services: A Case study in Forth Ward, Edinburgh*. Paper presentation in: Life After the Ph.D. Annual Conference. 20-22 August 2012. Windsor Great Park: Cumberland Lodge.

Fejszes, V.R. 2012. *New Public Management and Organisational Performance in Social Services: A Case study in Forth Ward, Edinburgh*. Paper presentation in: Ph.D. Association and Graduate School Fifth Annual QMU Doctoral Student Conference: Engage. 22 November 2012. Edinburgh: Queen Margaret University.

Fejszes, V.R. 2013. *New Public Management and Organisational Performance in Social Services: A Case study in Forth Ward, Edinburgh*. Paper presentation in: Inaugural Public Management and Administration Postgraduate Conference. 08-09 May 2013. Birmingham: Aston University.

Fejszes, V.R. 2014. *NPM and Organisational Performance in Public Services: A case study in Forth Ward, Edinburgh*. Paper presentation in: Public Administration Conference. 09-10 June 2014. Liverpool: PAC.

Fejszes, V.R. 2015. *Performance measurement at Scottish local government level: A case study in Forth Ward, Edinburgh*. Paper presentation in: PAC Doctoral Workshop. 19 May 2015 Liverpool: PAC.

Elliott, I. and Fejszes, V.R. 2015. *Local Government in 2015*. Paper presentation in: Scottish Politics Explained Conference. 25-27 May 2015. Edinburgh: Holyrood Magazine.